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DECEMBER



**'METEOR'
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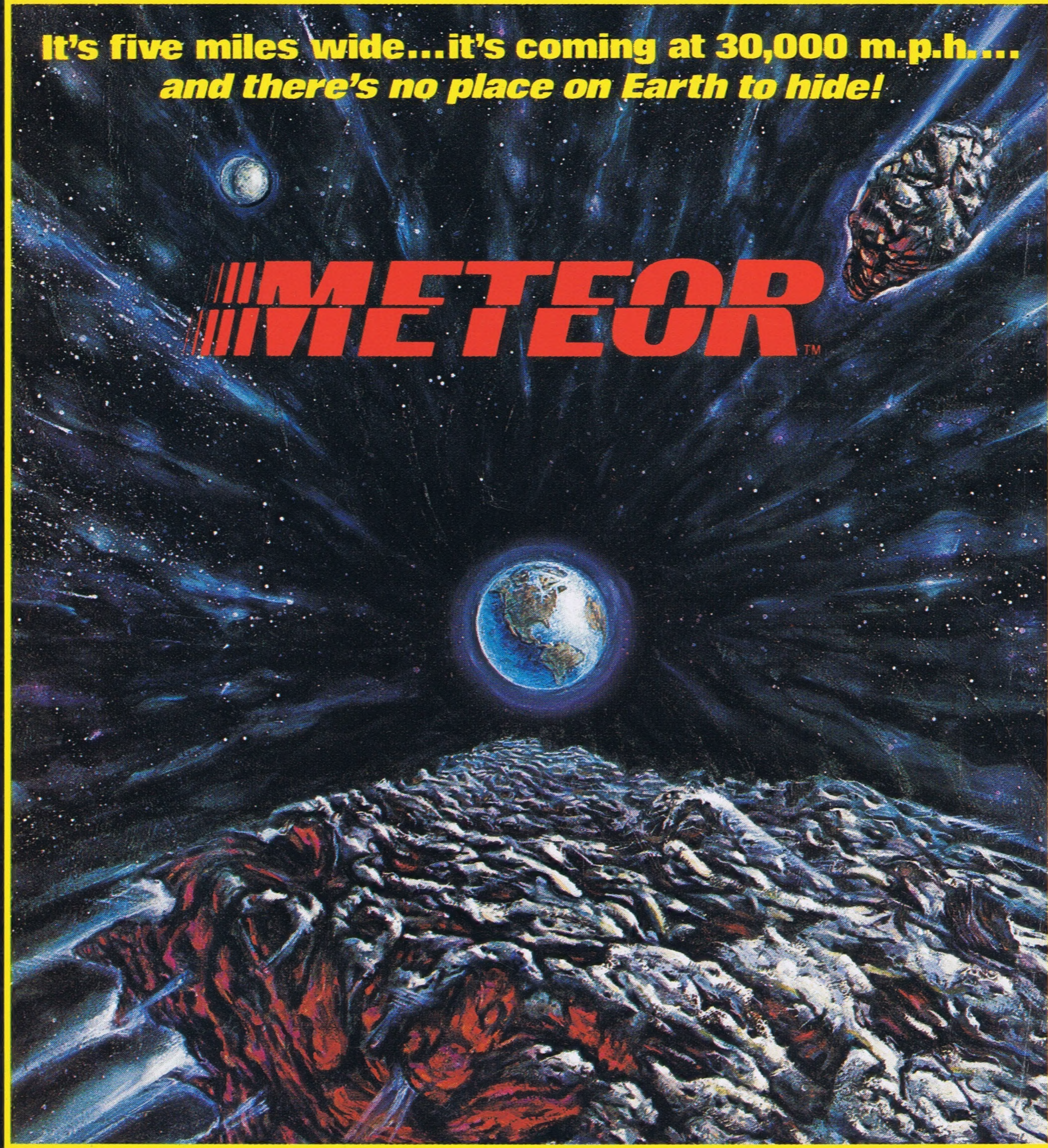
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in **METEOR**



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NUMBER 29

THE MAGAZINE OF THE FUTURE

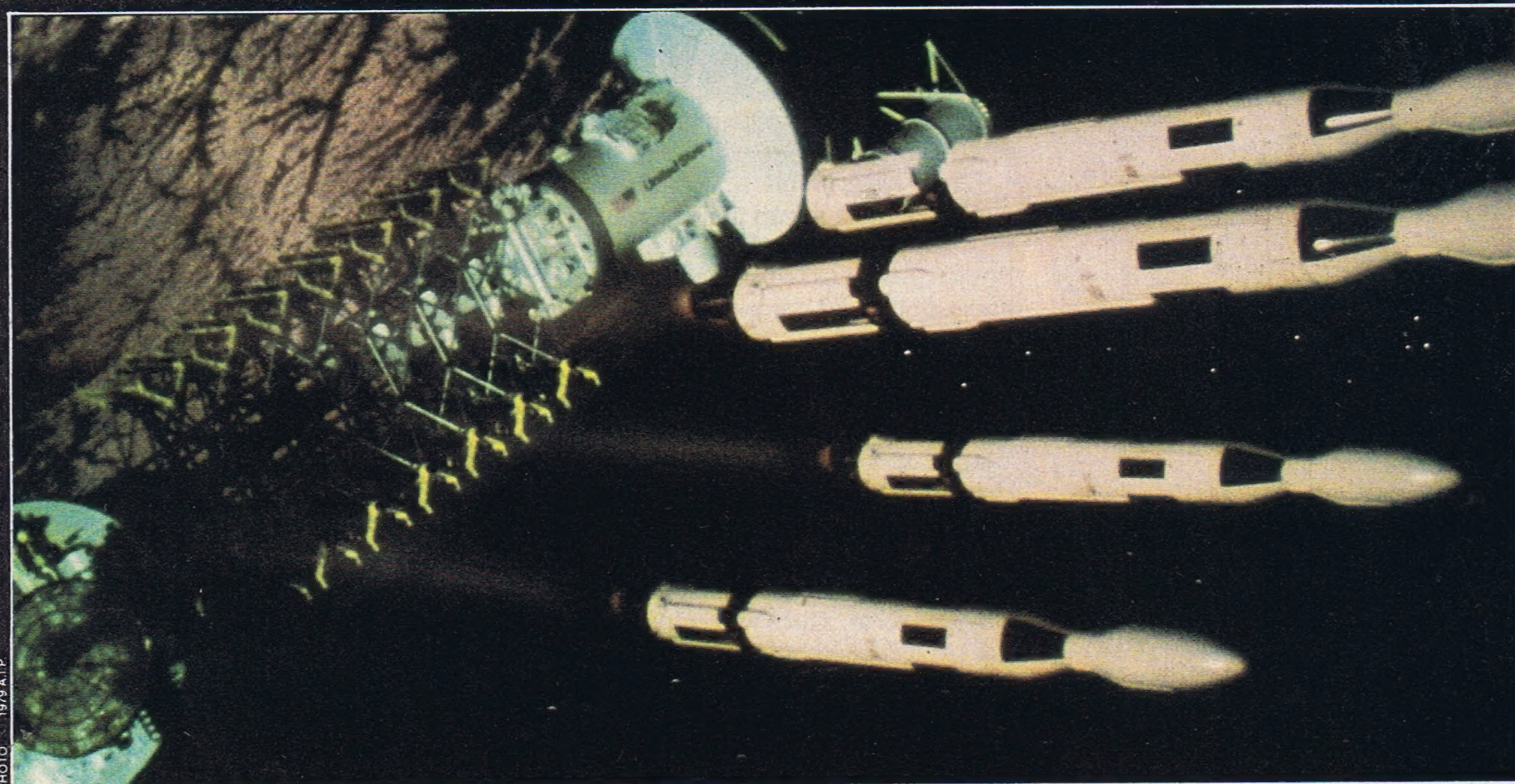


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Business and Editorial Offices:

O'Quinn Studios, Inc.
475 Park Avenue South
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Publishers
NORMAN JACOBS
KERRY O'QUINN

Editor
HOWARD ZIMMERMAN

Art Director
CHEH N. LOW

Managing Editor
BOB WOODS

Associate Editor
ROBERT MARTIN

Science Editor
DAVID HUTCHISON

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Space Art Advisor
RON MILLER

Special Projects
TOM O'STEEN
PETER MOSEN

Associate Publisher
IRA FRIEDMAN

Assistant Publisher
RITA EISENSTEIN

Production Assistants: Beverley Gerdin-Campbell,
Susan Oster, Angeliqne Trouvere.

Contributors This Issue: Roy Ashton, Martin Bower, Alan Brender, Howard Cruse, Peter Cushing, Roy Field, Jack Katz, Tom Kidd, Christopher Lee, Derek Meddings, Tom McDonough, Jeff Szalay, Al Taylor.

For Advertising Information: Ira Friedman, Rita Eisenstein (212) 689-2830.

ABOUT THE COVER: "Meteor" is racing to Earth, as A.I.P. presents its biggest-budgeted film to date. Artist Ron Miller has rendered a vision of the fiery ball as it descends upon a helpless Manhattan. In the film, the city is obliterated through the magic of special effects. "Meteor" coverage begins on page 18. Art: © 1979 Ron Miller. Photos: © 1979 A.I.P.

ABOUT THE CONTENTS PAGE: With the deadly meteor bolting toward Earth, the planet's only resolve is to attempt to destroy it by means of nuclear missiles—leading to an international imbroglio. Photo: © 1979 A.I.P.

FROM THE BRIDGE

Boy Jumps to Death!

When I first read the newspaper stories I decided it was nothing more than a bizarre tragedy, but the more I thought about it the more I saw a warning and a cry.

You remember the details: 15-year-old Eddie Seidel jumped to his death from a bridge near his home in St. Paul, Minnesota. Before jumping, he told police (who were trying to talk him down from the perch) that he was upset because *Battlestar Galactica* had been dropped as a network TV series.

The boy's room was filled with posters, magazines and *Galactica* paraphernalia. "He bought everything put on the market," his stepmother said. "He also took tape recordings of all the shows." When ABC announced the cancelation of *Galactica*, Eddie contacted the network with his protest, but the series was doomed—and so, apparently, was young Eddie.

The warning in this incident is against letting yourself become so involved in a piece of fiction that it means more to you than life itself. Science fiction is exciting to all of us (that's why you're reading this magazine) but as I warned once before (see "From the Bridge" STARLOG #14), we must be careful to know the difference between an imaginary world and the world we really live in.

Imaginary worlds can inspire us, thrill us and make us think. They are valuable to the way we live—but there are not *where* we live. It is dangerous to forget that fiction is not a substitute for life; that a television series, no matter how much you love it (and rightly so), is there for you to *use*—to make your life *better*.

But your life does not take place inside 21 diagonal inches.

That's the warning, and it is especially serious for young people who may not have much of a life of their own—yet. But I said there was a *cry* in this story, too.

Eddie's parents had sent him to a psychiatrist several years ago. "The psychiatrist said he was just kind of bored with life," his father said. "There was nothing here for him to excel in. There was no real challenge here on this Earth." Apparently, he did well enough in school, but his classes bored him. "I really should have tried to get him into a gifted children type situation," his father said after the suicide.

The cry that rings from Eddie's grave is that of an intelligent, spirited boy who wanted more from the world than his life offered. My guess is that he loved the dangers and challenges of life aboard the *Galactica*, and that his own life in St. Paul was fairly dull in comparison. My guess is that Eddie was dying of boredom even before he climbed to that bridge railing.

This is not a unique story. I grew up in a small, ordinary town where everyone was in bed by 9:00 at night—not exactly my idea of excitement. Almost every kid in the world grows up in an environment that is not filled with adventure—and they must endure it until they are old enough to find a place that suits them better and build their life the way they want it to be. Every kid must learn to tolerate boredom, and every parent must try to provide excitement and stimulation.

If only poor Eddie had developed more patience; if only his parents and teachers had seen his boredom and offered him the encouragement and understanding he needed; if only he had found the kind of excitement in his own life that he enjoyed with Starbuck and Apollo.

But all that is past now, and the only *good* that can possibly come from Eddie's death is for those of us who are alive to heed the warning and hear the cry.

Life can be every bit as romantic as the best science fiction, but we cannot sit back and watch our own life story—we must *become* the hero.



Kerry O'Quinn/Publisher

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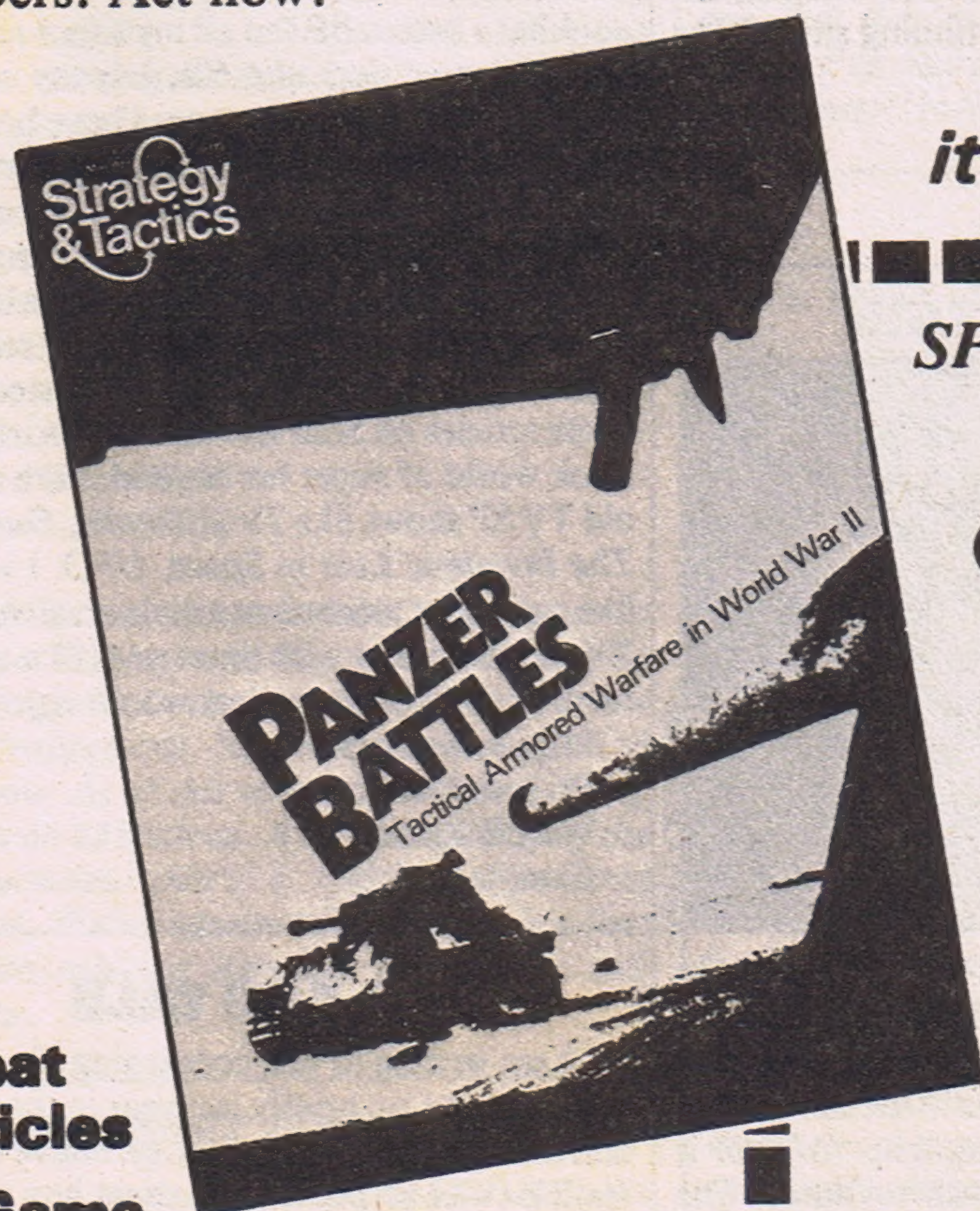
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 New York, N.Y. 10016

"ALIEN" BRILLIANT

... As you congratulate the makers of *Alien* on their fine work, I would like to congratulate you on yours. Mr. Zimmerman's comments on the movie and the fine points he made on Jerry Goldsmith's score were very effective. However, there were a few more things that have been overlooked. SF has played a large part in Hollywood's game of glamour (*Moonraker*, *Star Wars*). Not to put these films down, but there were over-fantasticized movies. In most SF movies, action always takes second chair to the special effects. Not so in *Alien*. The cast was brilliant as was Scott's directing. I agree with one of your readers who wrote in and said he thought Sigourney Weaver should get an Academy Award for her performance. As you've probably noticed, I really enjoyed the movie. I'm in the movie theater every time a new film comes along, but *Alien* is the only film I've seen four times. As a matter of fact, I never read any issues of STARLOG until you started having coverage of *Alien*. You can be sure now that I'll be reading it in the future.

Pamela Jo Delk
 103 Cayce Valley Dr.
 Columbia, TN 38401

WHAT ALIEN?

... Frankly, I was confused by the movie *Alien*. Perhaps you could help me. I saw quite a lot in the picture. There were all those flashing lights and those billowing colors of smoke. I was particularly amused by the actors, portraying present-day, foul-mouthed, drunken chain smokers somehow transported far into the future, still wearing their Hawaiian shirts, ball caps and briefs. I thought that old carnival trick "man with head through hole in floor talking" was a real pip. However, it's the title of the show that puzzles me. Was there supposed to be an alien in there someplace? I looked and looked, but I never saw one. A friend told me that was the whole idea—it was supposed to be hiding. The only out-of-this-world creature I noticed was Sigourney Weaver—great body, rotten actress.

Samuel Orr
 809 Walnut St.
 St. Elmo, IL 62458

WHAT COCOON?

... After I saw *Alien*, I was left wondering: How did all those eggs come to be on board the derelict and why did the alien kill off the Nostromo's crew? I would like to thank you for answering these question in your interview with H.R. Giger (STARLOG #26). I would also like to award Ridley

Scott the "Upper Class Twit of the Year" award for leaving out the cocoon scene. I think that any break in the action which it might have caused would have been offset by the information it would have provided.

Roger Sorensen
 Case Western Reserve U
 Cleveland, OH 44106

"PRISONER" CLUB



PHOTO: © 1977 ITC ENTERTAINMENT

... Recently I found a group that was greatly into *The Prisoner*. Here is the address, which you may wish to print for all *Prisoner* fans who read your magazine.

Six of One Club U.S.
 The Prisoner Appreciation Society
 P.O. Box 61
 Cheltenham, Gloucester
 GL 52 3JK
 Britain

I just recently became a member of this club myself. So devoted are they that they hold an annual convention at the actual filming site of *The Prisoner* series.

Ted Eckel
 545 East Second St.
 Perrysburg, OH 53551

FACT & FICTION

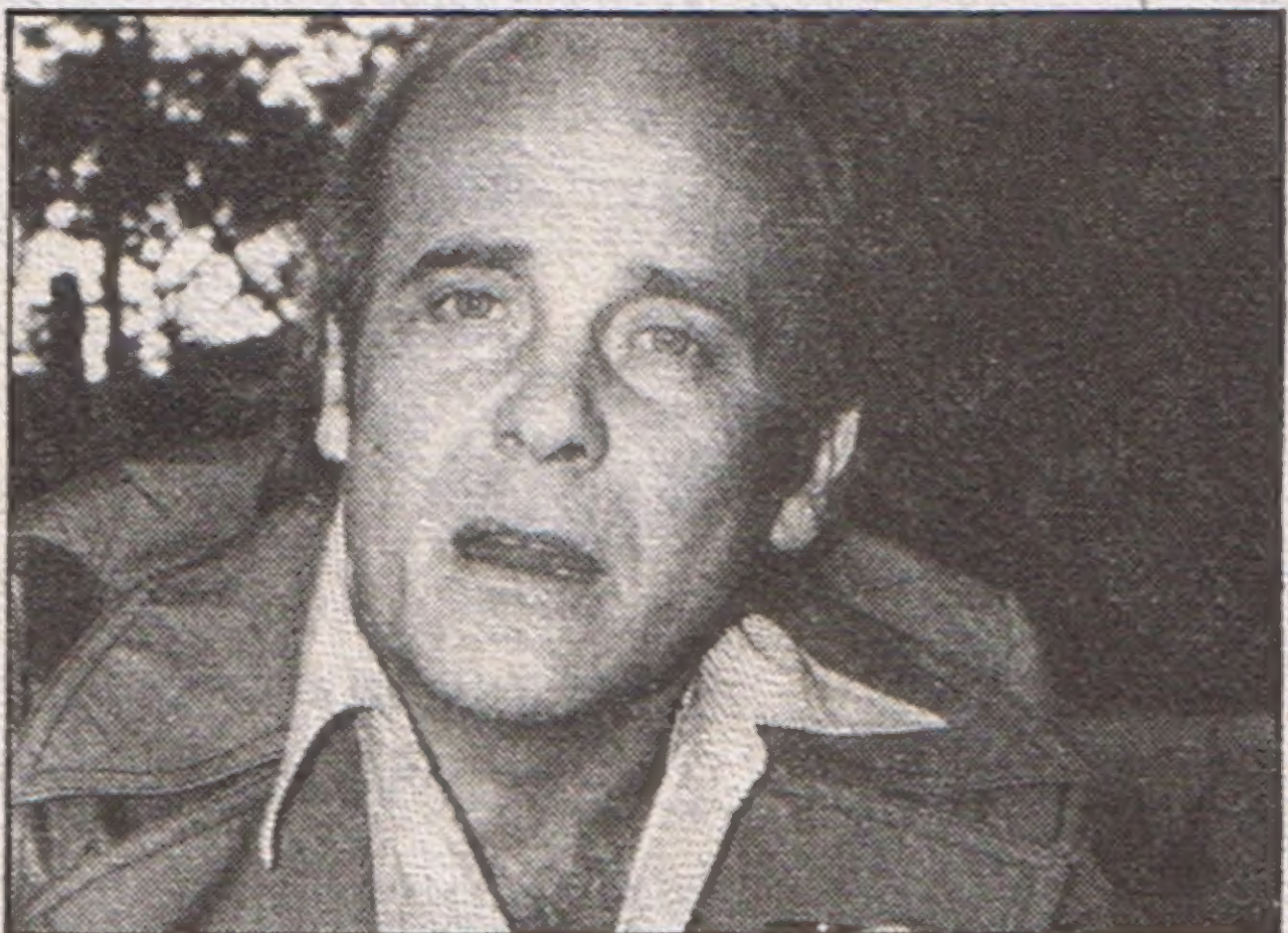


PHOTO: ALAN BRENDER

... I am writing in response to what actor Bo Brundin (STARLOG #25) said regarding "science fiction." He said his new film *Meteor* is science fact not science fiction. It seems to me that he was putting down the genre, stating that "*Meteor* is science fact because it can happen anytime." The film *Meteor* is science fiction because it hasn't happened yet." I'd like to suggest that Bo Brundin and everybody involved with the film read science fiction. There is a lot more to SF than "swashbuckling space operas with wooden characters."

John E. Bowers
 Bremerton, WA.

ANYTHING BUT MUNDANE

... I quote here from the caption of the picture of Buzz Aldrin stepping from the LEM to the surface of the Moon (STARLOG #26 page 34): "How mundane the reality is compared to the fantasies; July 20th, 1969." Are you suggesting that it was "mundane" for millions and millions of people the world over to sit in front of televisions and listen to radios for news of the greatest space adventure of all time? I refer, of course, to the historic landing on the Sea of Tranquility by the *Eagle* in 1969. I, for one, will never forget gripping the sides of my chair as I listened to the delayed voice of Neil Armstrong announce that "the *Eagle* has landed." My sister and I literally jumped for joy in our living room at his words. In that moment, we were feeling anything but "mundane." No fantasy movie director has captured the "magnificent desolation" described by the Apollo 11 astronauts after they reached our nearest neighbor in space. None had quickened our pulses as they were when the *Eagle* once again lifted off for its rendezvous with the *Columbia*. So I say to the person whose casual use of the term "mundane" belittled one of mankind's greatest triumphs: "Take a walk in that airless void without a portable life-support system and have a real adventure."

Sue Robison
 Route 12, Box 437
 Bowling Green, KY 42101

NO MORE WAITING

... I have been a SF fan all my life. I am 33 years old, and ever since the 60s, heyday of *Famous Monster* and *Spaceman* mag, I have been waiting for your kind of mag to hit the market and make a comeback. I am program director of WCLB radio and I have been in radio as a newsman D.J. combo for almost 12 years and I have been investigating and researching UFO and related subjects for 15 years. I would be interested in seeing some articles on Stan Lee and others in the comic book world of super heroes and more reports on old TV SF shows like *Time Tunnel*, *Outer Limits*, *The Invaders*, *Lost in Space*, *UFO*. I would also like to suggest an issue or article on all movies and TV shows dealing with time travel of any shape or form. I think your readers would enjoy it.

Billy J. Rachels
 Program Director
 WCLB Radio
 Camilla, GA

A SAD TALE

... I am writing to you concerning *Dr. Who*. The program was on briefly last year in the afternoon and then was put on at 1:30 a.m. I have written the station twice to put it back on at any time better than that. They won't do it. What should I do? In issue #26 there are many letters concerning the program in "Communications." As I said, I did that (twice) and they won't put it on because of "low ratings." At 1:30 a.m.—I would say so! I even sent them copies of articles from your magazine concerning the show's popularity. Still no. I also asked if they would show the two *Dr.*

Who movies at their regular afternoon movie time. No answer to that letter. I even went as far as to write to PBS to ask them to repeat the John Pertwee shows that were shown earlier this decade. No answer yet. I have spent much money and time becoming a member of the Doctor Who Appreciation Society and buying the Doctor Who novels and magazines. How can you appreciate a show without watching it?

Brad C. Smith
1480 West California Ave.
Falcon Heights
St. Paul, MN 55108

"DR. WHO" FLOPS?



PHOTO: © 1978 TIME-LIFE

... As a devout fan of the syndicated BBC series *Dr. Who*, I was appalled by a recent article in another SF media magazine. The article stated that, due to a lack of response to the program, *Dr. Who* has failed to make it here in the States. They went on to say that "a bare handful of stations that began running the show last September continue to do so nine months later," and that the failure was due in part to Time-Life Television importing some of the less effective episodes, starring the fourth Doctor, Tom Baker. I hope this report is erroneous. Could you please clarify the show's status for its many fans across the country?

Jules R. Agnew
326 23rd Street Gulf
Marathon, FL 30050

Dr. Who's success is undeniable. The facts: In September '78, the series began broadcasting on 75 U.S. stations. In the months to follow, a few stations dropped out, but even more have picked up the show. As of this writing, the show is being broadcast on 92 stations. As for the quality of the Baker episodes, that's a matter of personal preference. We've admired Baker since his first major film role—as Rasputin in Nicholas and Alexandra.

NO DISCO PUNK

... If you and your sister magazine FUTURE LIFE continue to publish articles lauding today's disco and punk rock, I shall be forced to stop buying your otherwise excellent publications. These are not rock fanzines you are putting together. Leave this to the cretinous rock pulps that dominate today's newsstands. STARLOG and FUTURE LIFE are far too intelligent to cater to the simple-minded dolts who listen to this production-line

music. Rock is boring, repetitious. Once you've heard one song, you've heard them all. If rock is the music of the future, give me the triassic era any day. I'd rather tangle with a raging Tyrannosaurus Rex than the deafening blare of noisy discotheques.

Taras Grescoe
3782 W. 22nd Ave.
Vancouver, British Columbia
Canada V6S 1J6

CON-TENTED READER

... I wrote to thank you for announcing the SF Fantasy/Horror convention in Los Angeles on July 6-8 in your June issue. My friend and I are both fans of *Star Wars*, *Battlestar Galactica*, *Superman* and others. We went to our first convention and had a great time. We met John Colicos, Anne Lockhart and I got to kiss Herb Jefferson. We bought beautiful pictures and buttons which we could not find in Toronto. We saw some movies and some pretty weird-looking characters. We had such a good time that we are going to the convention here in Toronto (also advertised in your magazine) Aug. 10-12. Thanks to you, we were able to get three-day passes in advance to our first convention. Thanks a lot and keep up the good work.

Carolyn Alron
Toronto, Canada

We're glad your first con was so successful. Unfortunately, you cannot be certain that all cons are what they're advertised to be. Recently, in fact, we've heard of a real con artist. (See the "Log Entry" in this issue.)

HELPING

... On behalf of the 1980 Westercon, I'm currently conducting an investigation of the availability of facilities for the handicapped at SF conventions. There was a panel at the 1979 Westercon which was devoted to handicaps. During the panel, the subject of what SF conventions could provide for the visually impaired, hearing impaired and wheelchair users was discussed. As far as the 1980 Westercon is concerned, our hotel is very accessible to wheelchairs, but there may be other things that should be done in this field. We have less information on the needs of the visually impaired and the hearing impaired. If people with these problems are not attending SF conventions because of the lack of some service, we want to find out what services are needed. We would also like to have some notion as to the number of people who potentially need these services. Some of the ideas which have already been proposed include: front-row seating in the masquerade for the visually impaired, large-print titles in the art show, large-print and Braille copies of the program and sign-language interpreters for panels and talks. We would appreciate other possible ideas from your readers.

Sylvia Stevens
Westercon Publications
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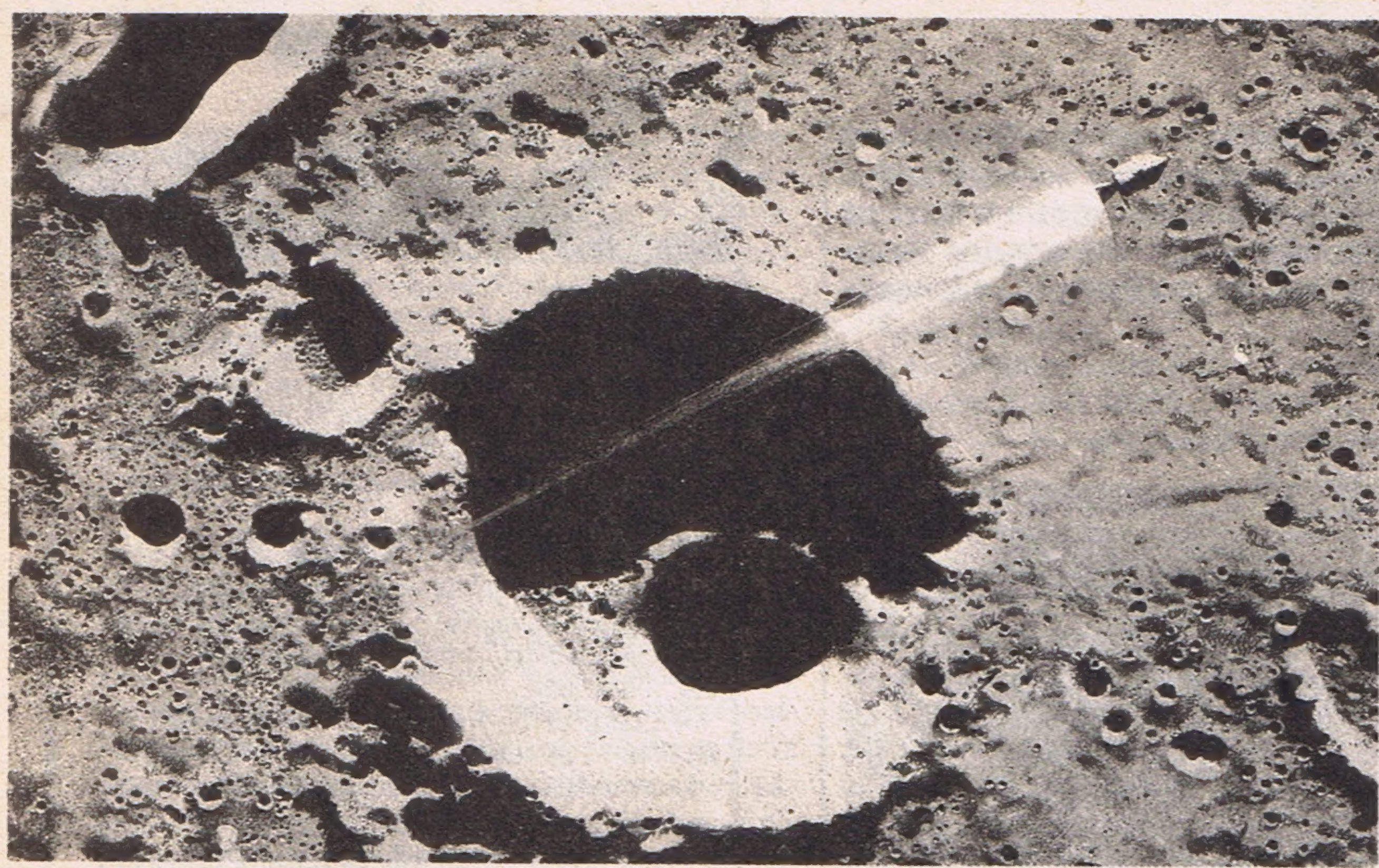
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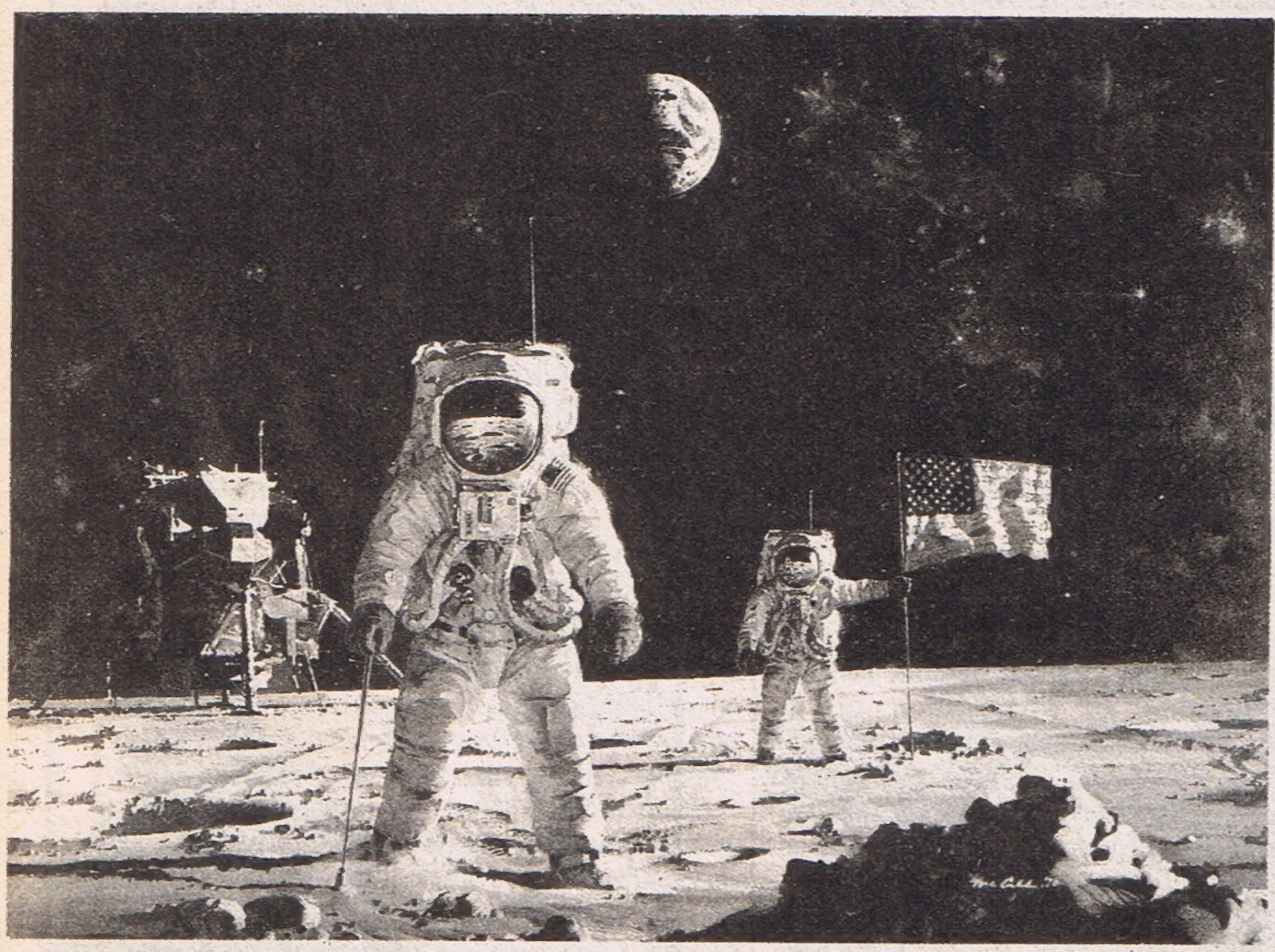
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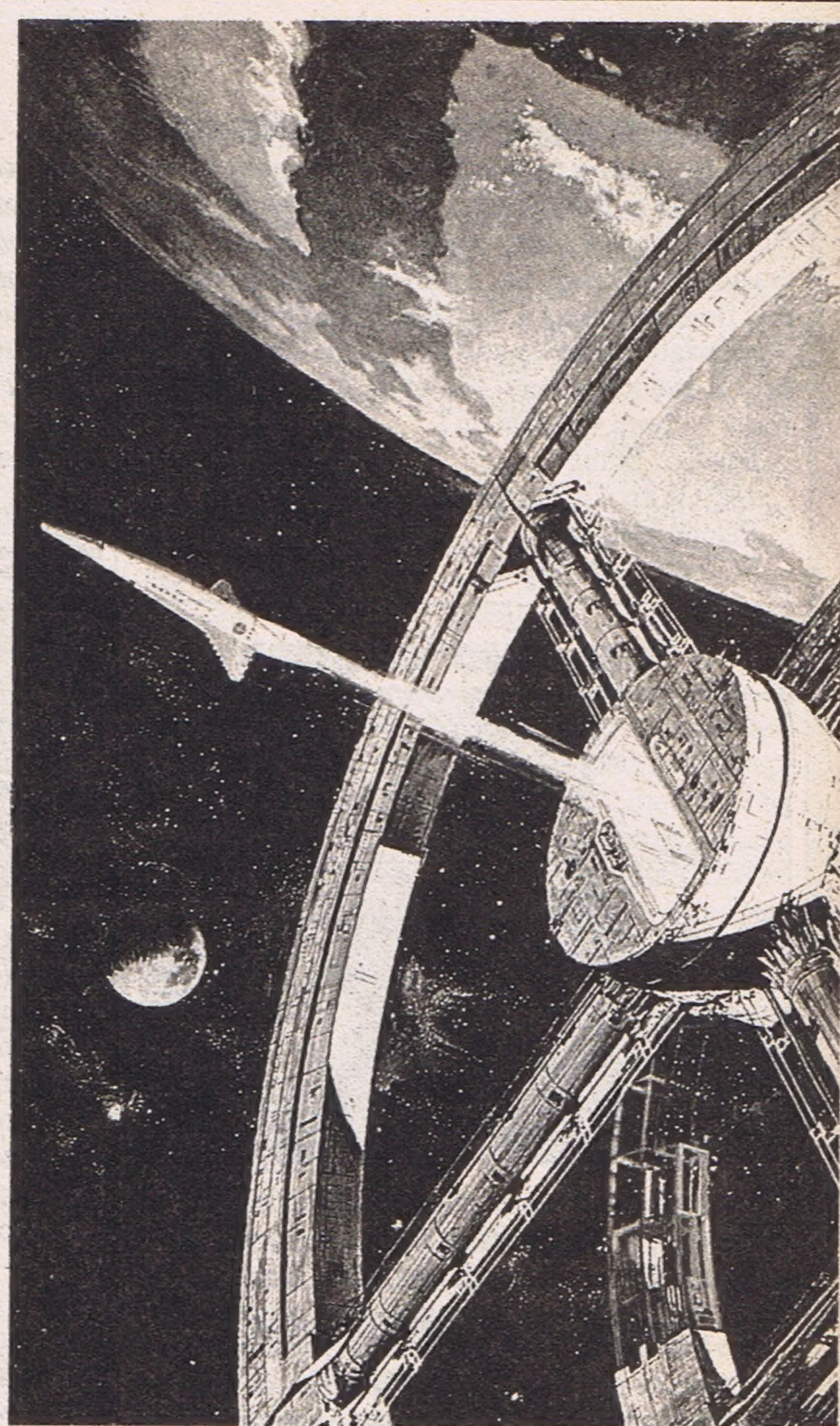
"Apollo VIII Coming Home" (NASA Collection)



"First Men On The Moon" (Private Collection)

In the future Man will use his down-to-earth technology to reach deep into the awesome infinity of outer space. Robert McCall has already been there. He has a mind that spans time and space, an eye for technical detail and the hand of a great painter. His spectacular Space Station One, created for the film "2001: A Space Odyssey," has become a collector's item and a contemporary classic. Frequently commissioned by NASA to do on-the-spot paintings of America's ventures into space, McCall is always present for important launches and splashdowns. His oil paintings have gained international acclaim reproduced as U.S. Postage Stamps, one of which was the first stamp cancelled on the Moon, and another, his most recent, commemorated the historic

Apollo-Soyuz space rendezvous. McCall's work hangs in important museums, corporate offices and private collections around the world, and he has been honored in a one-man space art show at the Smithsonian Institution. There is no question about it, Bob McCall is the premier space artist of this generation. Now offered are three gallery-quality lithographs of McCall's work. These are incredibly detailed, beautifully colored paintings of Man's greatest journeys. Each 24 x 28 inch lithograph is accompanied by a descriptive statement in the artist's own words. Each lithograph can be acquired for \$10. This limited collector's edition has been authorized by the artist and FUTURE LIFE Magazine guarantees your complete satisfaction.



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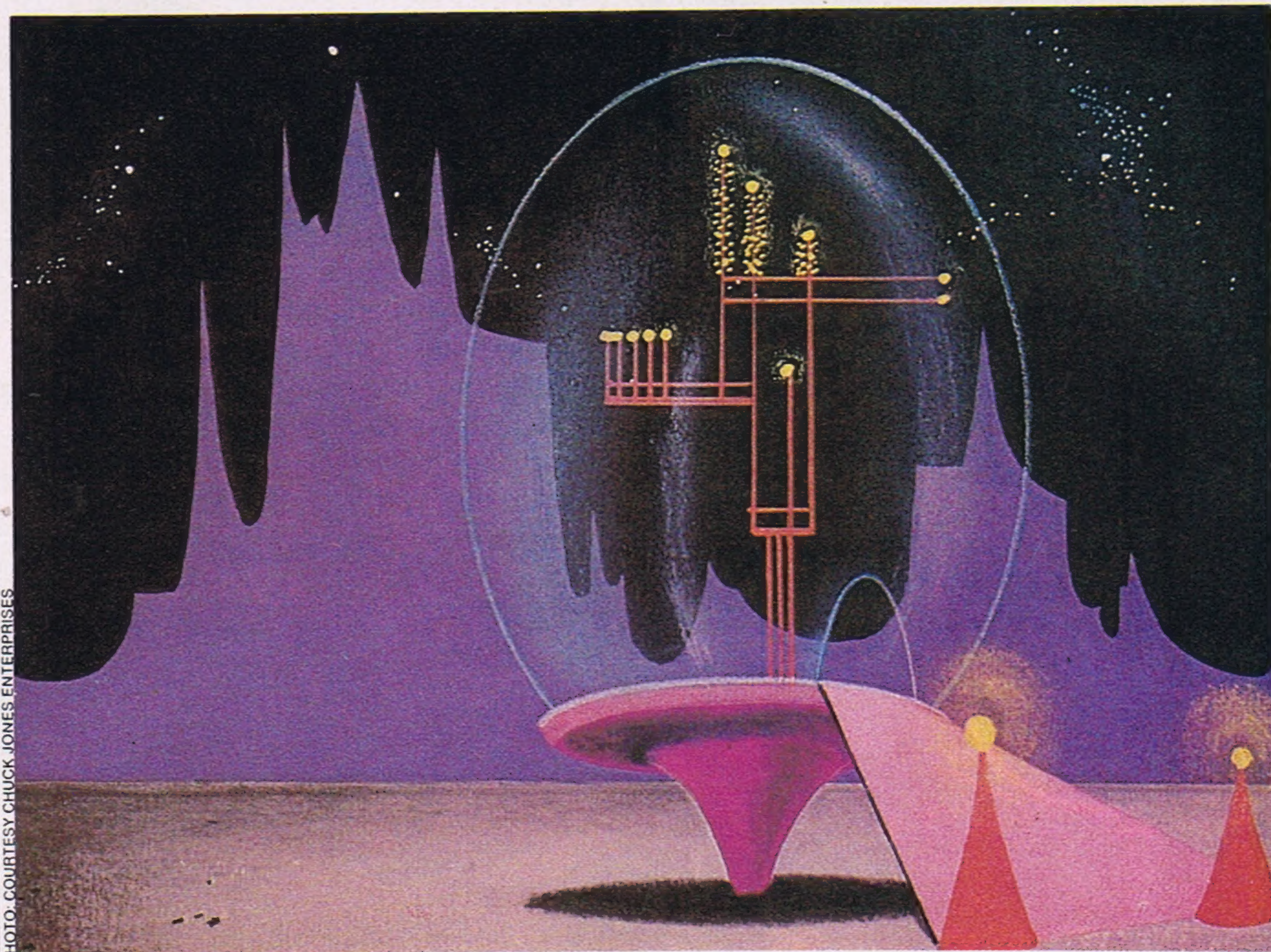


PHOTO: COURTESY CHUCK JONES ENTERPRISES

Chances are that before the end of the year, the interplanetary traveler with webbed feet, Duck Dodgers, will emerge from the 1950s in an all new animated short, *Duck Dodgers in the Return of the 24½ Century*.

Chuck Jones Enterprises is keeping mum on the story, but they do promise that young space cadet Porky Pig will be on screen along with Dodgers' rival—Marvin Martian.

Maurice Noble did the background art for the Jones short. Noble also worked on the original which was released in 1953. That classic short was featured in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* and is said to have inspired George Lucas in making *Star Wars*.

When Chuck Jones became the head of animation at MGM in 1962, Noble worked with him on the TV specials *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, *Horatio Hears a Who* and a feature film, *The Phantom Tollbooth*.

Noble also worked with Jones on his Academy Award-winning shorts, *For Scentimental Reasons* & *The Dot and the Line*. ☆

Maurice Noble did the background art for *Duck Dodgers in the Return of the 24½ Century*. It's been more than 20 years since Dodger's first flight.

"GALACTICA" SPECIAL: NO GO?

The "Log Entries" section of STARLOG 25 included a report that ABC had ordered the production of a two-hour *Battlestar: Galactica* telefilm. But now that the post-cancellation furor has died down, there are indications that the project will never get off the ground.

But don't take our word for it; here's what the folks in Hollywood have to say:

An ABC spokesperson: "Well, we've all heard the rumor, too. But nobody's going to confirm or deny anything until the paper work is done. We honestly don't know. All we can say is that as of now, there is no firm plan to present a *Galactica* movie on ABC this year."

A Universal spokesman: "I haven't heard any more on that in a couple of months now. ABC never officially announced any such plan—so now they can't un-announce it. I don't think anything has ever been signed—except that ABC did express interest in such a project."

A spokesman at Universal Hartland SFX facility: "All we were told, a couple of months ago, was to keep the miniatures of *Galactica* in good shape and under lock and key, that they were likely to be needed again. We're not currently working on *Galactica* effects." ☆

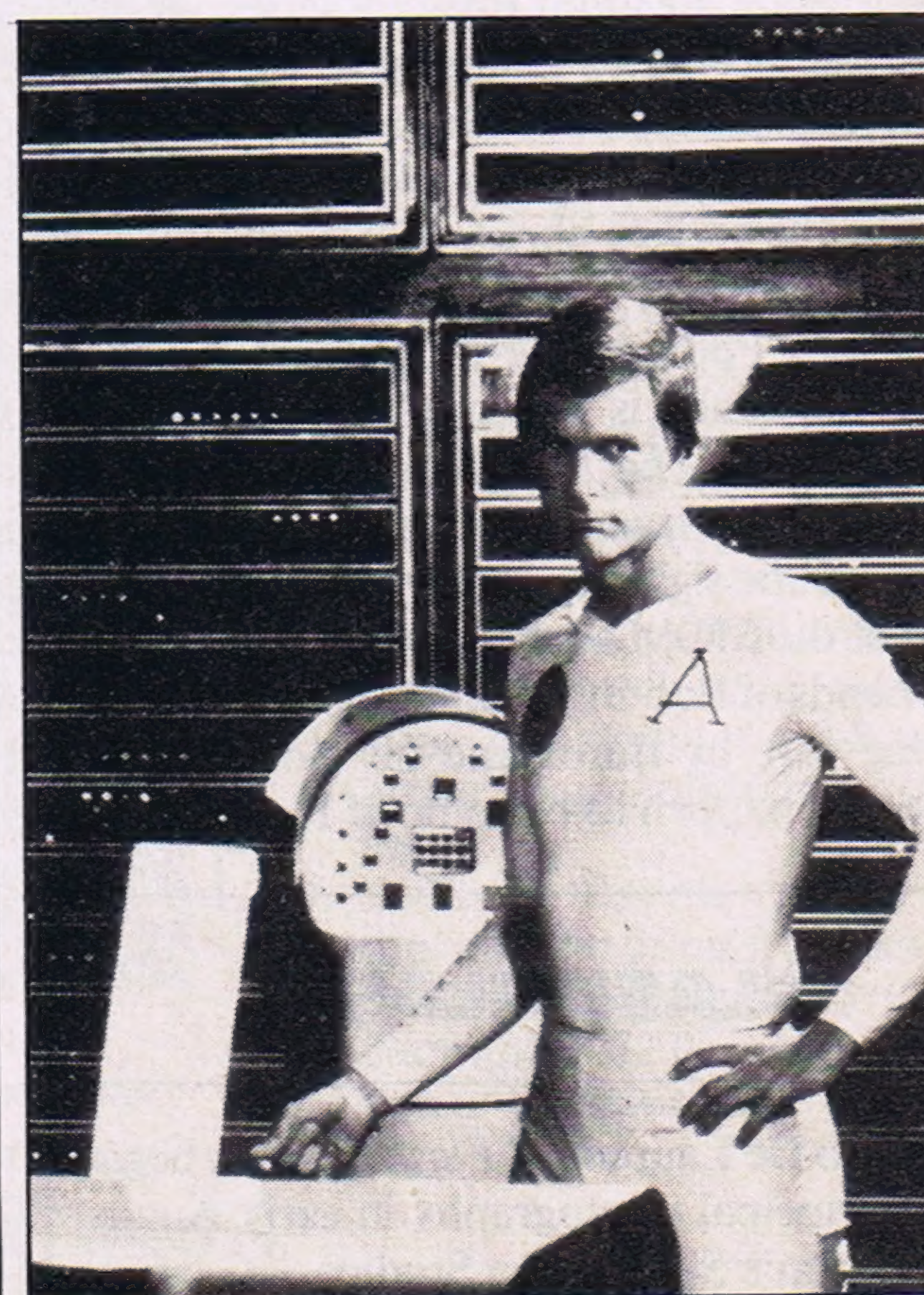
NBC'S SF SHUFFLE

During the first week of July, in an unprecedented move, NBC-TV announced its full schedule of films and specials for the fall season. Two of the programs announced were of special interest to SF fans—the three-part mini-series presentation of Ray Bradbury's *The Martian Chronicles*, scheduled for airing September 17-19, and Quinn Martin's science-fiction television pilot, *The Aliens Are Coming*, scheduled for October 30.

Six weeks later, NBC executives announced some "minor revisions" in the fall schedule. As a result, both SF entries have been removed from the schedule, with no



Rock Hudson stars in *Chronicles*.



Keir Dullea's *World* will air in '80.

new air dates announced. As with *Brave New World*, a mini-series originally scheduled to air last March and still not seen, the schedule changes were credited to an attempt to bring stronger ratings to the third-rated network.

According to network vice president Curt Block, *Brave New World*, *The Martian Chronicles* and *The Aliens Are Coming* will all be seen on the network in early 1980. ☆

SAGAN MEETS TIME MACHINE

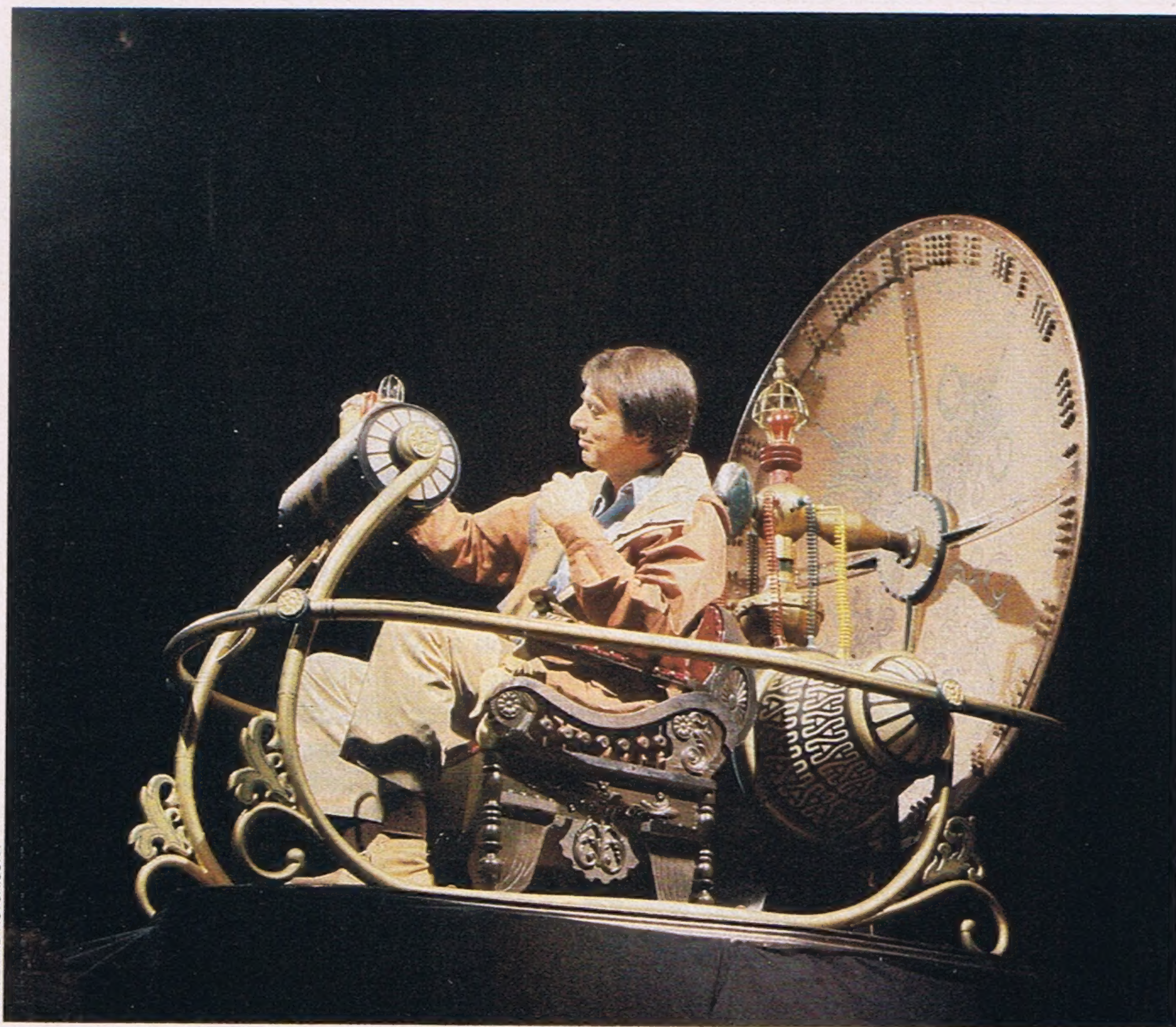


PHOTO: DAVID HUTCHISON

Cosmos, a 13-part PBS-TV series, written and hosted by scientist Dr. Carl Sagan, is in full production. One segment of the series finds Dr. Sagan traveling back in time to visit the ancient library at Alexandria. For such a journey, Dr. Sagan needed a time machine. Perhaps the most famous of all time machines is the classic vehicle from George Pal's *The Time Machine*.

The time transporter had disappeared from public sight for some years after it was sold at the MGM auction—until it came into the hands of Bob Burns and was restored with loving care by Burns and his close friends, who just happen to be some of Hollywood's

top special-effects artists, screenwriters and fans of SF. (See article in STARLOG #18.) The offices of KCET-TV, which are co-producing the series with Carl Sagan Productions, called Bob Burns to arrange for the use of the machine in the series. STARLOG's reporter was on hand when Dr. Sagan stepped into the machine for the day's shoot.

Cosmos, which will air in the fall of 1980, is making use of locations around the world and all the latest special-effects technology to dramatize its theme—understanding the joy and power of science in society. "We won't talk about black holes," smiles Sagan, "we will visit them!" ☆

FLASH FLASH

Dino De Laurentiis' *Flash Gordon* began principal photography in early August at London's Shepperton Studios.

Sam J. Jones, discovered by De Laurentiis when he appeared on ABC's *The Dating Game*, is cast for the lead role. *Black Hole* star Max Von Sydow takes on the role of Ming the Merciless and Topol, known for his role in *Fiddler on the Roof*, is cast as Zarkov. Other cast members include Melody Anderson as Dale Arden, Ornella Muti as Princess Aura, Brian Blessed as Vultan and Peter Wingarde as Klytus.

As previously announced, Mike Hodges is directing the film. Lorenzo Semple Jr.,

author of the cult classic *Pretty Poison*, wrote the screenplay. Nicholas Roeg, initially involved in the production, left the crew after repeated delays in scheduling. ☆



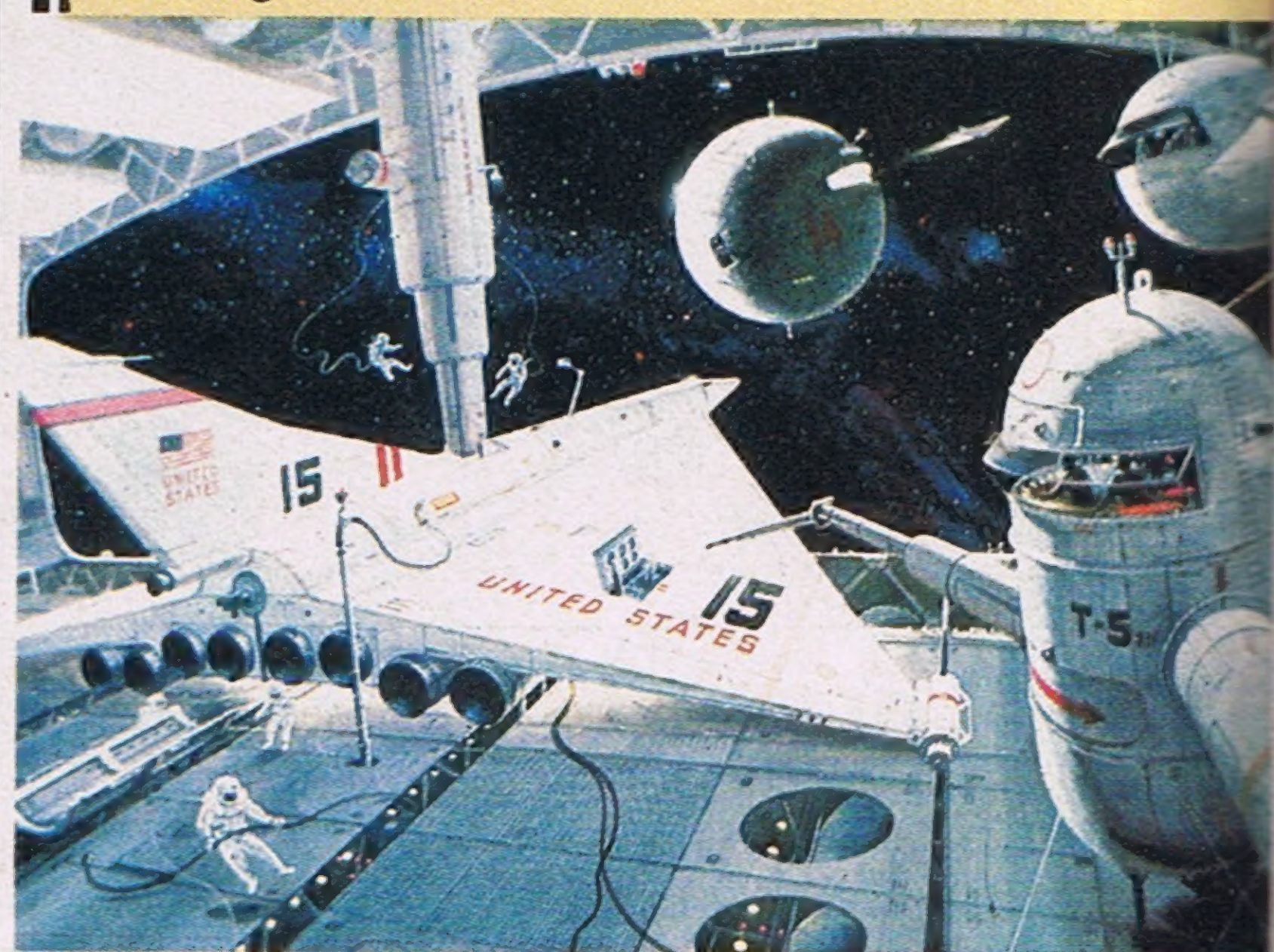
ART COURTESY KING FEATURES SYNDICATE

**BACK BY
POPULAR DEMAND**

The Space Art Club

The introduction of the Space Art Club to the readers of STARLOG/FUTURE LIFE marked a historic event. Never before was such an offering available; a series of limited-edition space art prints at a price most everyone could afford. Charter members have written expounding their satisfaction, but the original deadline prevented would-be members from joining at a savings price. Now, we're pleased to announce that you, too, can have an opportunity to own and enjoy fantastic space art at bargain rates.

1



The Club features exclusive, limited-edition space art painted by the masters of the field: Bob McCall, Vincent DiFate, Ron Miller, Adolf Schaller, John Berkey, Ludek Pesek, Don Davis, plus one mystery artist prominent in the space art field. Virtually the Hall of Fame in space art, this incredible group represents a staggering collection of artistic techniques and scientific imagination. Each print was specially commissioned by STARLOG/FUTURE LIFE and produced on high-quality, textured paper, measuring approximately 18" x 24" in size, ready for framing!

For your convenience, there are different ways in which you can order this exclusive space art. Choose from one of these opportunities: *The Complete Collection*—the entire portfolio consists of all eight space art reproductions for only \$45.00; *Mini-Series A*—comprises print #'s 1-4 representing the artwork of McCall, Miller, DiFate and Pesek for only \$25.00; *Mini-Series B*—includes print #'s 5-8, featuring the works of Berkey, Schaller, Davis, plus one mystery space art print for only \$25.00; *Individual Orders*—for those desiring prints on an individual basis, simply indicate the one(s) you want on the order form.

3



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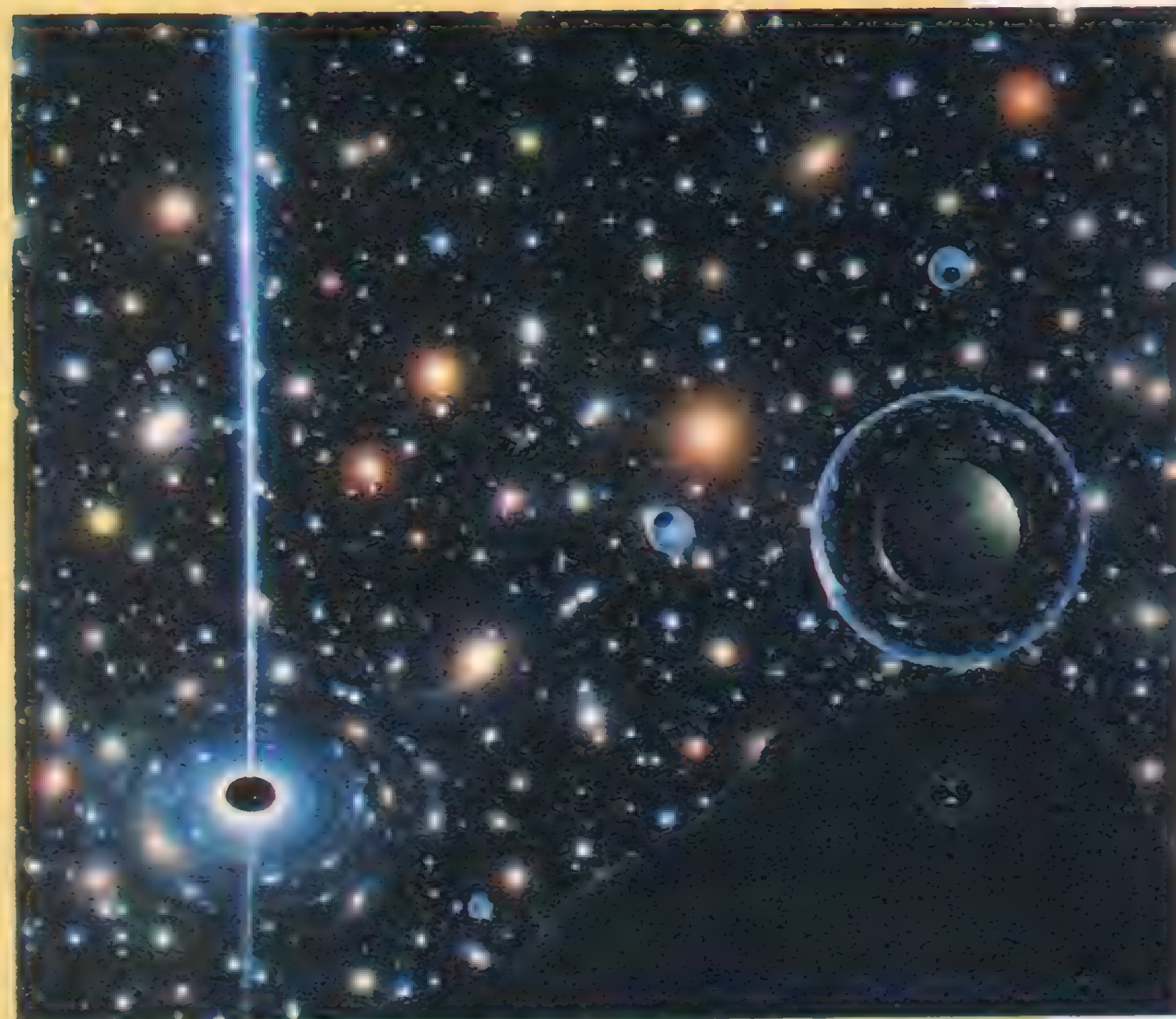


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6

7 ▼



- #1. "Space Station 2000"
by Bob McCall
- #2. "Exploring Titan"
by Ron Miller
- #3. "The Dream Fulfilled"
by Vincent DiFate
- #4. "Duststorm on Mars"
by Ludek Pesek
- #5. "Lightship Descending"
by John Berkey
- #6. "HZ Hercules Star System"
by Don Davis
- #7. "Anywhere, Anywhen, Anyone"
by Adolf Schaller
- #8. Mystery Space Art Print
by prominent space artist.

5



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JOVIAN EXCURSION

Jupiter and its four planet-size moons, called Galilean satellites, were photographed in early March by Voyager 1 and assembled into this collage. They are not to scale but are in their relative positions. Red-hued Io (upper left) is nearest Jupiter; then Europa (center); Ganymede and Callisto (lower right). Nine other much smaller satellites circle Jupiter, one inside Io's orbit and the other millions of miles from the planet. Not visible is Jupiter's faint ring of particles, seen for the first time by Voyager 1.

During its excursion through the Jovian system, Voyager 1 discovered a faint ring of particles around Jupiter (not visible in the photograph), bolts of lightning and vast auroras in the planet's atmosphere and towering volcanic eruptions on the satellite Io. More than 18,000 pictures of the planet and the Galilean satellites were obtained with Voyager 1's imaging system during the 98-day observation period.

Voyager 1 will be at its closest approach to Saturn on Nov. 12, 1980, and Voyager 2's closest approach to the planet is expected to occur on Aug. 27, 1981. An option exists for controllers to target Voyager 2's trajectory past Saturn for a January 1986 encounter with Uranus. ☆



PHOTO: COURTESY NASA

MODULAR LIVING

For John Hogan, 4,057,207 is more than just a lucky number.

That's the patent number of his Space Vehicle Module—a modular construction of his own design that, when joined to other modules in orbit, will form space stations large enough to sustain a station's crew, equipment and machinery.

Hogan is pictured here with a related in-

vention—Fuse Blocks. Like the modules, these geometric forms can be used to create a variety of constructions.

According to Hogan, his Space Vehicle Modules have an advantage over one-shot systems (such as Skylab) because they are small enough to be carried by space shuttles. Defective modules could be easily replaced.

Not so long ago, Hogan's original paper-model space station docked in STARLOG's office orbit, where it has shared space with us ever since. ☆



John Hogan's Fuse Blocks can be used as miniatures, mobiles and models.

THE GREAT ROCKETSHIP SEARCH

When it comes to locating missing rocketships, our readers have the noses of bloodhounds.

Shortly after one ship was tracked down (STARLOG #27), David and Annette McCord of Ionia, Mich., sighted a second ship.

This ship, which bears the markings



“Rocky Jones,” “Space Ship Mars” and ads for Silver Cup Bread, is located in Saulte Ste. Marie, Mich., on Portage St., behind the now-closed Northland Museum, across the street from the famed Soo Locks (have your maps handy?). According to the McCords, the Soo Train Tour in Saulte Ste. Marie passes right by the ship.

Although the bottom is rusted out, the McCords think the ship could be made space-worthy again.

What is the history of this ship? Where does it come from? We invite Starloggers to report any information on this second ship. ☆

NEW FROM THE PUBLISHERS OF STARLOG

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"STAR TREK" MEETS "STAR WARS" AT STARLOG

It was bound to happen...the only questions were where and when. This past August, *the force* met *the source* here in the STARLOG offices. *Star Trek* is still the all-time, most popular SF-TV series. The official source on *Trek* information is, of course, our columnist and Gene Roddenberry's personal secretary, Susan Sackett. On August 23rd, Susan stopped by the STARLOG office for a chat, and suddenly found herself face-to-face with the true force of *Star Wars*, David "Darth Vader" Prowse. David was in town to start a whirlwind, cross-country promotional tour for the re-re-release of *Star Wars*. As our source had never met the force before, Susan took the opportunity to sit down with Prowse and quietly discuss the pros and cons of various SF media productions. ☆



Publisher Jacobs confronts The Force.



Susan Sackett handles the situation.



David Prowse takes on editor Zimmerman.

PUBLISHER "ALIEN"-ATED

Imagine the surprise on the face of STARLOG publisher Kerry O'Quinn (and you'll have to imagine it) when he recently opened this package from makeup man and mask designer David Ayres. According to one of the staffers present at the time, "We all gathered around to watch him open it...as he reached down into the crinkled paper stuffing, suddenly a hideous, mustard-colored 'thing' sprang from the box and adhered to his startled face." O'Quinn fell into a state of paralysis and has since been slowly recovering (although he complains of chest pains). ☆



PHOTO: DAVID HUTCHISON

"THE ENVELOPE PLEASE..."

The Academy of Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Films announced that its television committee has selected nominees for outstanding achievements in television in the past year.

The nominees are: Best Television Program: *Battlestar: Galactica* (ABC), *Mork and Mindy* (ABC) and *Fantasy Island* (ABC). Best Television Actor: Robin Williams, *Mork and Mindy*; Richard Hatch, *Battlestar: Galactica*; Dirk Benedict, *Battlestar: Galactica*. Best Television Actress: Laurette Spang, *Battlestar: Galactica*. Maren Jensen, *Battlestar: Galactica*; Pam Dawber, *Mork and Mindy*. Best Past Achievement Television Award: *Star Trek*, *Lost in Space*, *The Twilight Zone*.

Dr. Donald A. Reed, academy president, announced that special television awards already have been voted to actor William Shatner of *Star Trek* and to the program *Outer Limits* in recognition of past achievements.

The awards will be presented at a special ceremony during the Academy's Sci-Fi Film Expo, which will be held at the Tiffany Theater in Los Angeles between Oct. 26 and Oct. 31.

These awards are separate from those given by the academy for motion pictures and seen on national syndicated television. ☆

CONS: NOW THE BAD NEWS

A convention promising Harlan Ellison, George "Sulu" Takei and Robin "Mork" Williams may be a con of the worst kind. According to the Billings (Montana) *Gazette*, Steven M. Weiss advertised the First Annual Science Fiction International Convention, urged potential congoers to pay him \$15 for a ticket and covered his tracks until the State Bureau found him in a Great Falls Bookstore.



Robin Williams was billed as a guest.



Harlan Ellison was also on the roster.

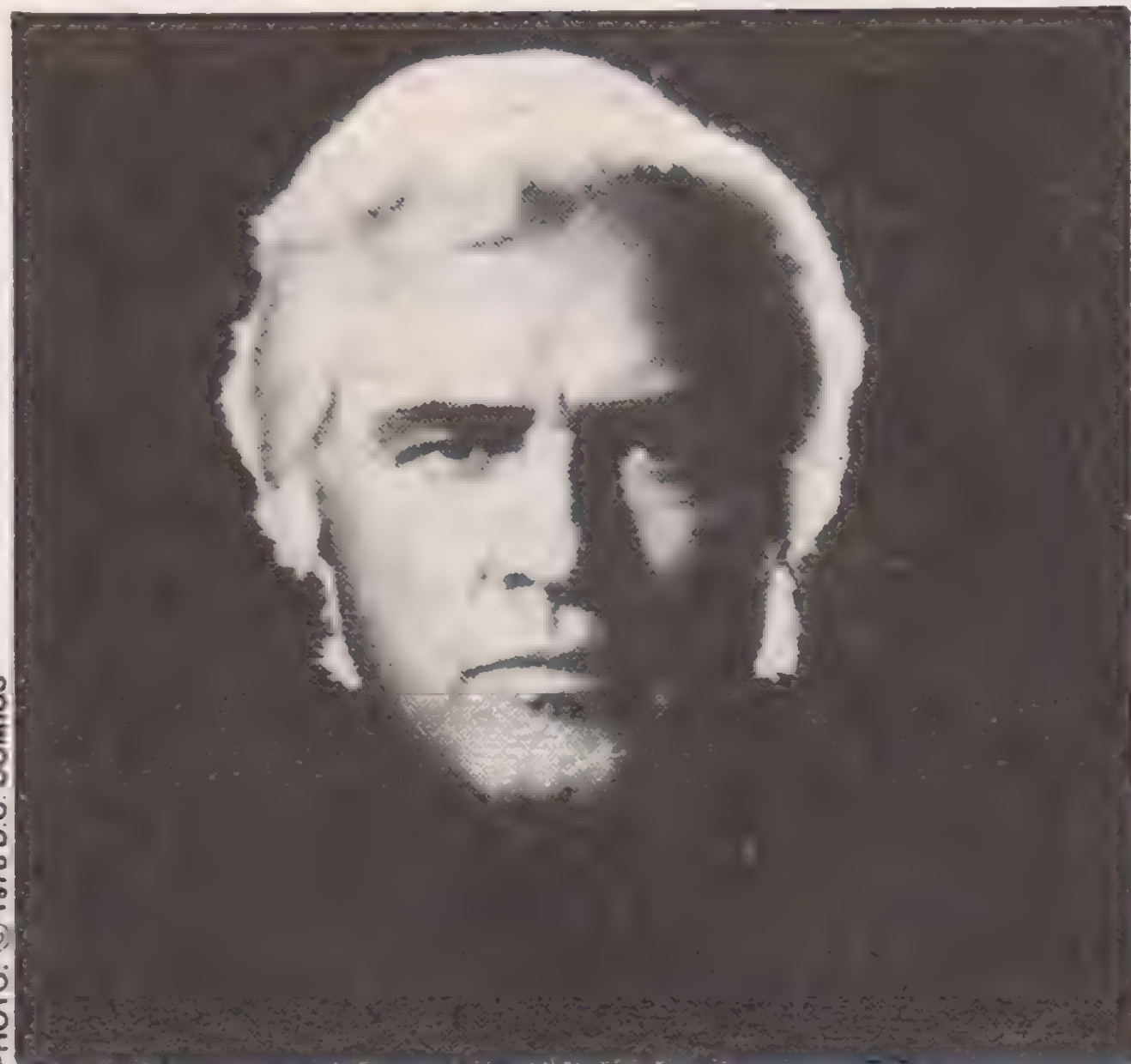
Although Ellison, Takei and Williams' agents denied any agreement with the former New Yorker, Weiss held to his story and told the bureau that more stars, such as Leonard Nimoy, James Doohan and the rock group Kiss, were added to his roster. A second attempt by the bureau to reach Weiss failed.

A couple of loggers, meanwhile, have written to us about the Con. One Canadian reader, who sent Weiss \$15, received a note from the hotel where the con was supposed to have been held. The note, he said, read, "Mr. Weiss, the gentleman booking the convention, has left Gt. Falls. No one can contact him." Another reader, who knows someone who gave \$45 to Weiss, claims, "We've been zapped, folks." ☆

PHOTO: DAVID HUTCHISON

COMING SOON...

It's been reported that Marlon Brando's been scripted out of the *Superman* sequel. It seems that producers Alexander and Ilya Salkind were unwilling to share a percentage of the net profits with the well-paid actor. The movie began shooting August 25, for release sometime next year...Elstree Studios is currently constructing mammoth storage rooms to contain *Star Wars* props between sequels...Dario Argento, director of the fright film *Suspria*, is currently preparing a fiery film version of Dante's *Inferno*...John Barry's composing the score for *The Black Hole*...Joey Travolta, John's brother, has the lead role in the SF suspense flick *The Warning*, now being filmed in London. Jack Willoughby's the director and Barry Sandler wrote the screenplay...Kim Milford, better known as Rocky in Broadway's *The Rocky Horror Show*, has signed to portray the title character in *Dorian*, a musical remake of *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Director Ken Russell (*Tommy*, *Altered States*) plans to shoot the film in New York...Producer Kevin McClory says that production will soon start on *Warhead*, a \$22-million film to star Sean Connery as James Bond. Meanwhile, United Artists and Albert Broccoli, creators of past Bond epics, have filed suit against McClory and Co. for plagiarism, copyright infringement and unfair competition...Lorimar, the



Brando written out of *Superman*.

film company that entered the SF field recently with *Americathon*, has more fantasy fare lined up for 1980. *The Good Leviathan*, from a story by Pierre (Planet of the Apes) Boulle, concerns a nuclear-powered supertanker with supernatural power, and *The Hawkline Monster*, from the novel by Richard Brautigan, is a horror-suspense tale set in the American West...Tokyo Movie Shinsha Co. has had considerable success marketing an animated 3-D TV series in Italy and Latin America. They're now trying to sell the show, which must be viewed through special glasses, in the U.S....Dusan Dukotic, whose animated short "The Substitute" won him an Oscar, will be directing his first live-



Clouds predicted on *Weatherman* front.

action film, *Home in the Universe*. Written by Milos Macourek, the story focuses on the lives of two children born in a skylab...Sergio Corbucci will be directing his first American film, a remake of the giant ants classic, *Them*. Stars will include Terence Hill...*Test Pilot Perx*, a Polish film based on the book by Stanislaw Lem, focuses on a space mission where robots join humans as members of the crew. Special-effects footage was shot in the Soviet Union and, according to advance reports, the results are quite convincing. Lem previously authored the book and screenplay, *Solaris*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich is expected to release the English version of the book, *Tales of Perx the Pilot*, early in November...*Weatherman*, a film originally billed as a \$12-million futuristic science drama, is reported to have met with financial difficulties. So far as STARLOG can determine, production is at a standstill....

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If you get a call from the Johnson Space Center in Houston sometime next year, it may be NASA, considering you for a job—as a space shuttle astronaut.

This year, from Oct. 1 to Dec. 1, NASA is accepting applications for Pilot and Mission Specialist astronauts.

Pilot astronauts, who control the space shuttle during launch, orbital maneuvers and landings and maintain vehicle systems, must have a bachelor's degree in engineering, biological or physical science or mathematics. Applicants must have at least 1,000 hours of "pilot-in-command" time in high-performance jet aircraft, are required to pass a NASA spaceflight physical and must be between 63 and 76 inches tall.

Mission Specialist applicants are not required to be pilots, but must meet the same educational requirements and should have at least three years of relatable experience (an advanced degree may be substituted for experience). They, too, must pass a physical, but can be three inches shorter than the pilots.

Civilians may get application forms and information by writing to: Astronaut (Mission Specialist) Candidate Program, or Astronaut (Pilot) Candidate Program, Code AHX, NASA Johnson Space Center, Houston, Texas, 77058.



☆ The official insignia for the first space shuttle orbiter.

PHOTO: COURTESY NASA

EXPLAINING THE UNEXPLAINED

Comic book fans will be happy to know that three men who have established firm reputations in that industry, have joined talents to bring more drama to comic strips.

Marv Wolfman, best known for his Dracula scripts at Marvel; Ross Andru, former artist for Wonder Woman and Spider-Man, now artist and editor at D.C. comics; and Mike Esposito, who's inked for nearly every Marvel character, are ready to capture readers with their brand new strip: *The Unexplained*.

According to Wolfman, "We want to do strong human-interest stories set against a researched backdrop of science fiction, the occult, mysticism, the strange—in short: *The Unexplained*. We want to give our strip the vital feeling comic strips seem to have lost. Most importantly, we want to do a comic strip that you will be interested in following day after day."

Copley News Service is syndicating the strip. Readers who want to see more of *The Unexplained* can write their local papers and ask them to pick it up.

A sneak preview of *The Unexplained*. The creators want more drama in comic strips.



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ASTRONOMICAL NOTES

Throughout the pages of the calendar you will find birthdays of space artists and astronomers along with notes on eclipses, phases of the Moon and other important celestial events.

DESCRIPTIVE TEXT

STARLOG's Space Art Advisor, Ron Miller (author of SPACE ART), has contributed a brief biographical sketch of each artist in addition to the artist's own description of the astronomical scene depicted.

PERFECT GIFTS

The 1980 SPACE ART CALENDAR is a perfect, quality gift for anyone interested in astronomy, science fiction, or art. Order several for Christmas presents—while they are available.

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Calendar will not be reprinted!

Down to the Wire with 'Meteor'



ALL PHOTOS - 1979 AIP

By DAVID HOUSTON

A Day on the Set

MGM Studios, Culver City, California. Two months prior to the October release date of *Meteor*—American International's multi-million-dollar disaster epic to end all disaster epics. One of five four-and-a-half-hour orchestra sessions is in progress in Scoring Room One. It will take nearly 24 hours to record the film's 50 minutes of music.

Composer/conductor Lawrence Rosenthal is on the other side of a thick, multi-layered glass wall rehearsing his 66-piece or-

chestra. In the temporarily quiet engineers' room are executive producer Sandy Howard, director Ronald Neame and other artisans at work on the film.

"Do you sometimes get the feeling," an engineer asks Neame, "that this is the only picture you've ever worked on?"

Neame looks up from his chair near the engineers' console and nods. (STARLOG first mentioned *Meteor* in issue number 1, speculating it would be ready for release in late '76 or early '77.) Neame's most recent

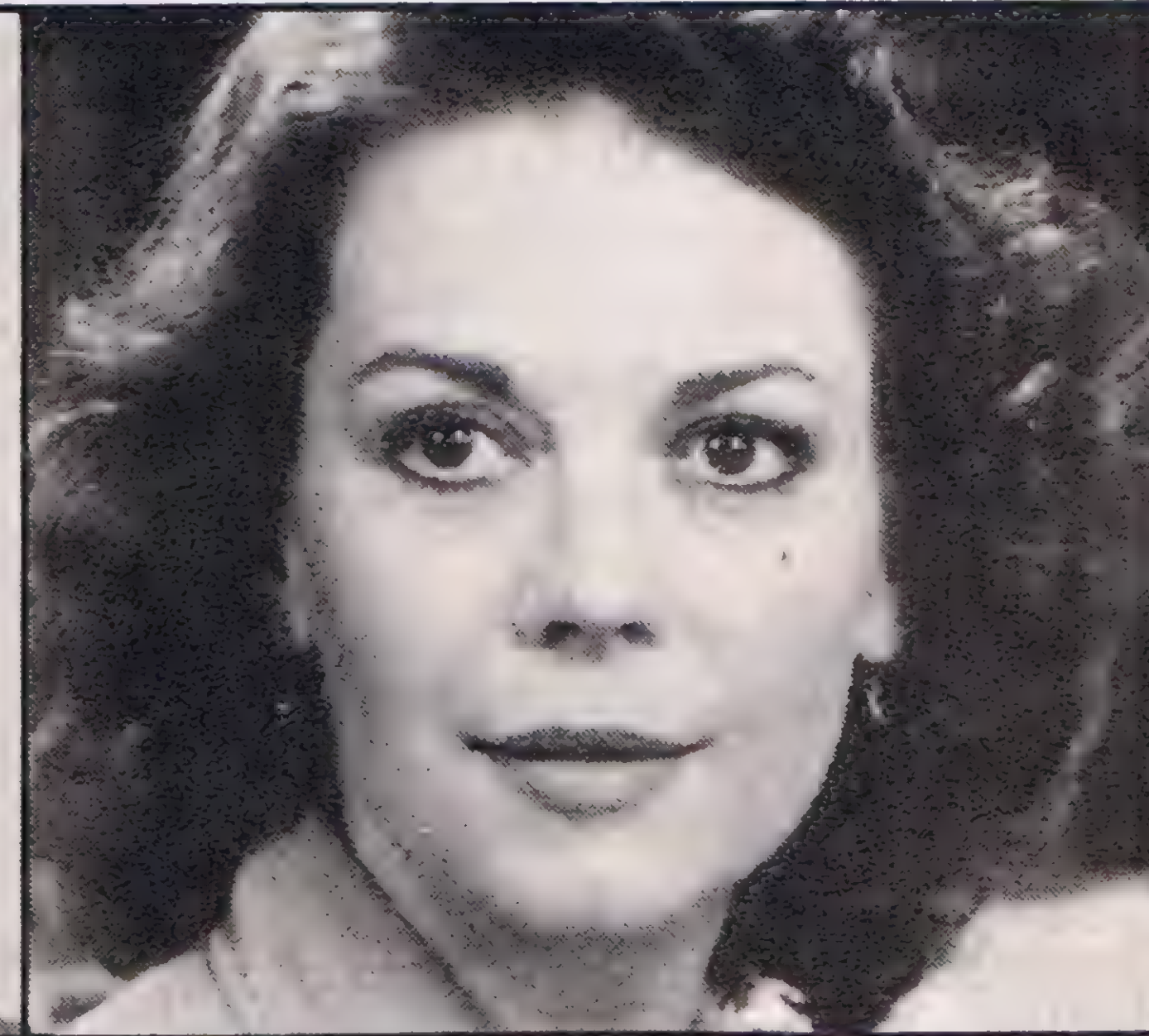
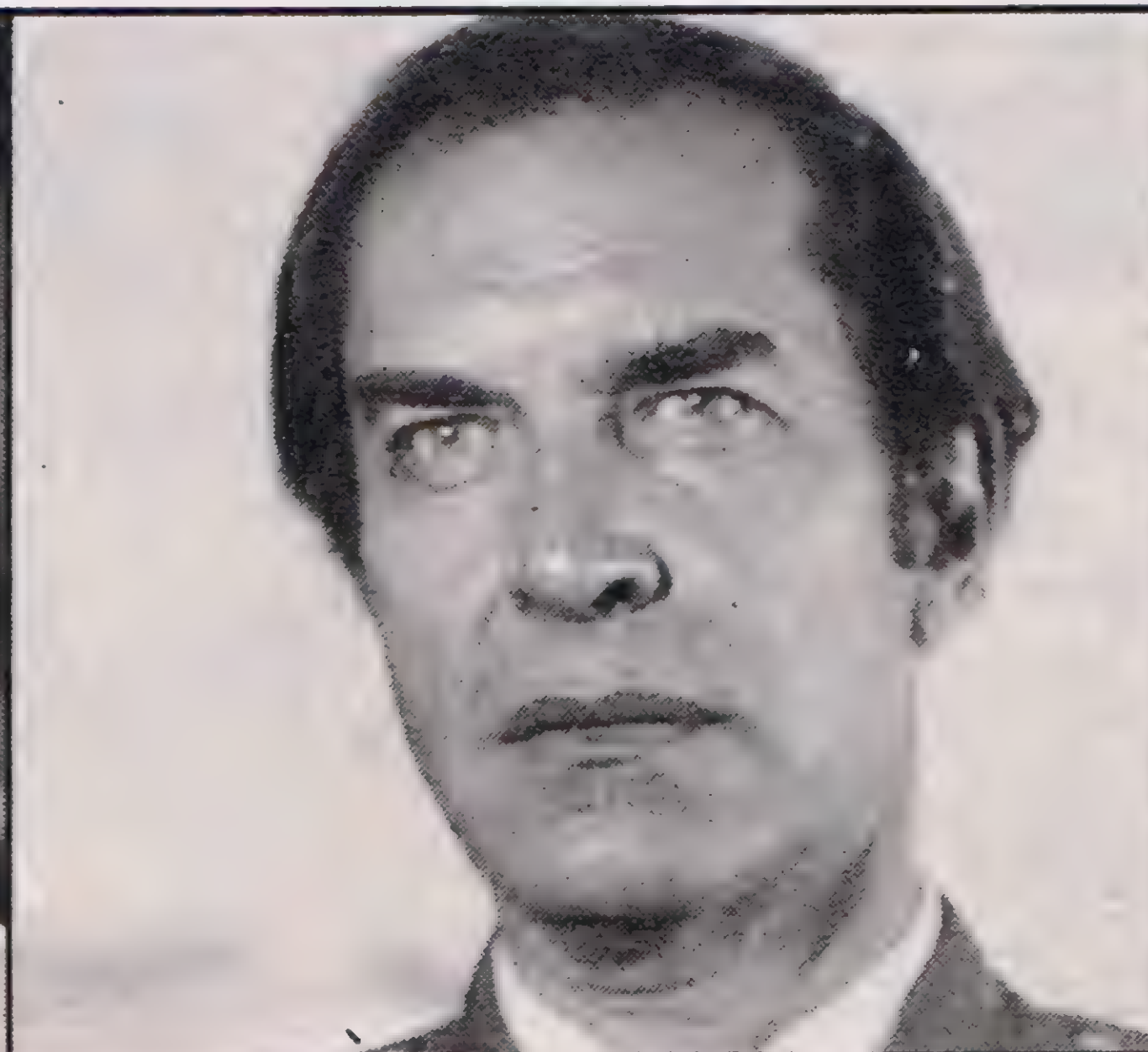
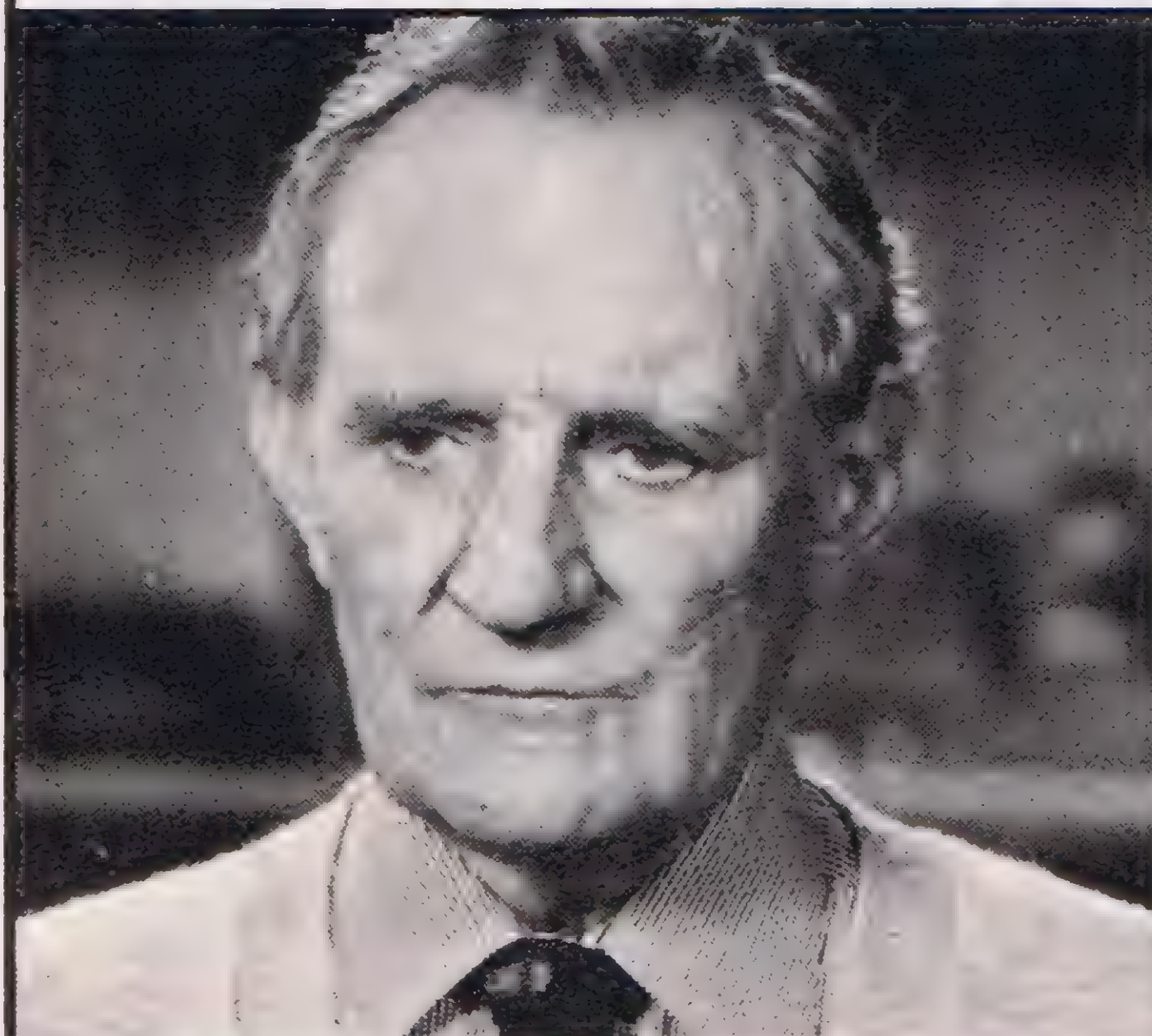
"big" picture was *The Poseidon Adventure*; and his credits include many classics of the British cinema.

The wide screen, high above the orchestra and opposite the conductor, flickers on with numbers ticking off a countdown. A technician announces, "Production 5037; 2524, take four." Red warning lights come on near every door. On the big screen, Sean Connery is pulling himself out of a trench of mud (where 'he' and other key characters are trapped when the rivers around Manhattan

The Cast: Trevor Howard

Martin Landau

Natalie Wood





Above: River mud and water floods the New York City subway system. Right: Nuclear warhead missiles designed for the military are used to deflect the space debris.

flood the subway system). A white cue-dot flashes in the center of the picture. Rosenthal's voice comes from one of the six enormous loudspeakers behind the spectators in the engineers' room: "One, two; one, two—" His arms lift the instrumentalists into life as the scene cuts to outer space. Flutes scream; violins swirl and pace. Three nuclear missiles sweep into view; the music swells, gains a rumbling undercurrent and a semblance of triumphant melody. Suddenly the screen goes black—except for scratches on the blank section of film—but the music continues on to strike a massive, frightening chord. "Okay, let's do it again," says Rosenthal calmly on the intercom.

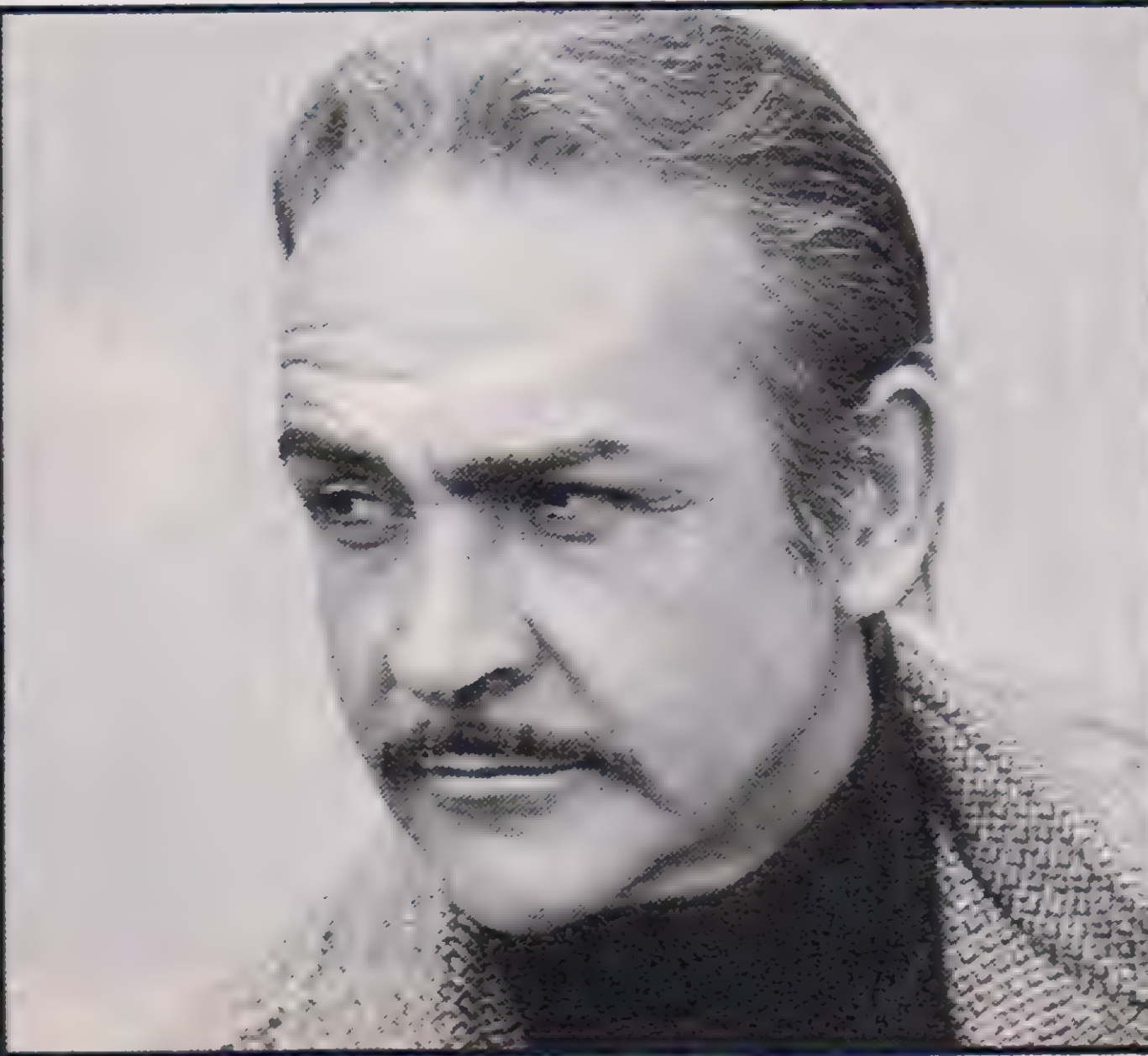
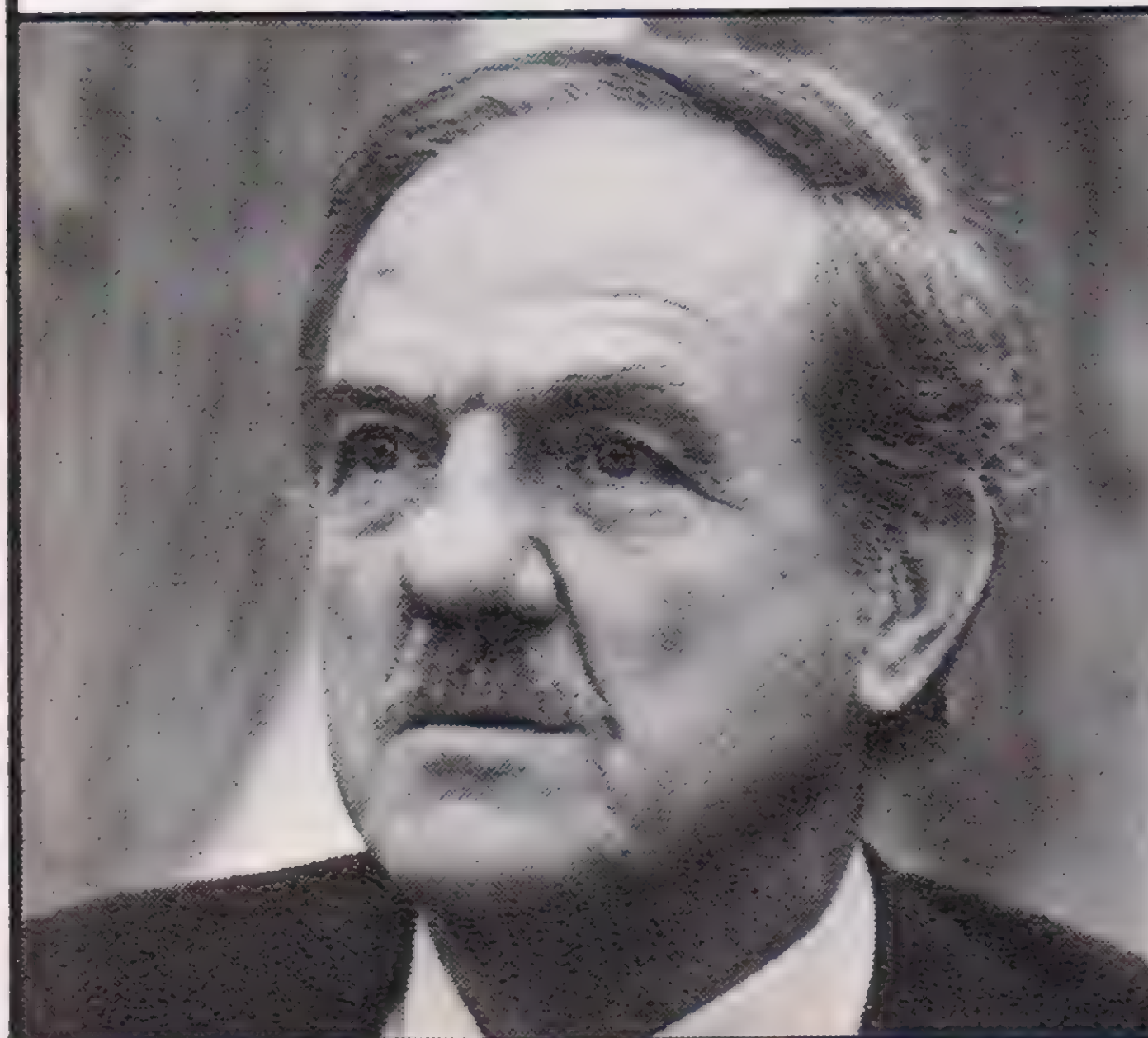
"That blank spot," Neame leans over to



Karl Malden

Sean Connery

Brian Keith





Director Ronald Neame talks through a scene with Henry Fonda as the President on the set of *Meteor*.

explain, "that's the meteor. We don't have the shot for it yet."

A little later, Rosenthal takes his 10-minute break in conference with Neame. Rosenthal wants another briefing on the 40-second segment he will have to record five days from now. The segment will show titanic scenes of annihilation at the very climax of the movie; and it is not yet on film. "Are things just going to explode and explode for 40 seconds?" Rosenthal quizzes. "Will the music even be heard? I haven't written that cut yet, and I'm just not sure what I'm doing."

Such incomplete prints at a scoring session are not uncommon in Hollywood. What makes *Meteor* an unusual case is that it is specifically the special-effects climaxes—and there are many of them—which are missing. *Meteor* has been as plagued as *Star Trek* (see STARLOG #27) in the effects department.

Meteor's various production problems developed roughly like this:

The SFX Shuffle

Frank Van der Veer, a veteran optical-effects expert, was first hired to produce *Meteor's* visual miracles. A year deep into production, he was dismissed from the project and virtually all his work was discarded.

"He was just unlucky," claims Bill Cruse, the newcomer to the effects field who was hired to replace Van der Veer. "So much of the movie special-effects work is risky—trial and error. This time, Frank—and he's a friend of mine—just didn't pull it off."

One problem, according to Van der Veer, was that too often Neame and the producers changed their minds mid-stream concerning how they wanted the effects to look. Neame says, "Frank insisted on using his own

camera to make the plates [basic landscapes on which elements in miniature were to be super-imposed]. And his plates weren't steady; every special-effects shot was a dead giveaway."

Bill Cruse had delivered footage of much of what was ordered from him... when he, too, was fired. Cruse claims his problem was that the *Meteor* company failed to supply him the agreed-upon operating funds. A spokesman in the *Meteor* production office says that while many of the elements Cruse created were excellent, he fell down in the optical department (ironically, Van der Veer's specialty).

As of this writing, just two months prior to the film's premiere date, Cruse's outer-space

shots are either being replaced or recombined optically by Rob Blalack (who did opticals for *Star Wars*); while the big terrestrial scenes of destruction are being remade by Gene Warren (best known for his effects in George Pal's *Time Machine*).

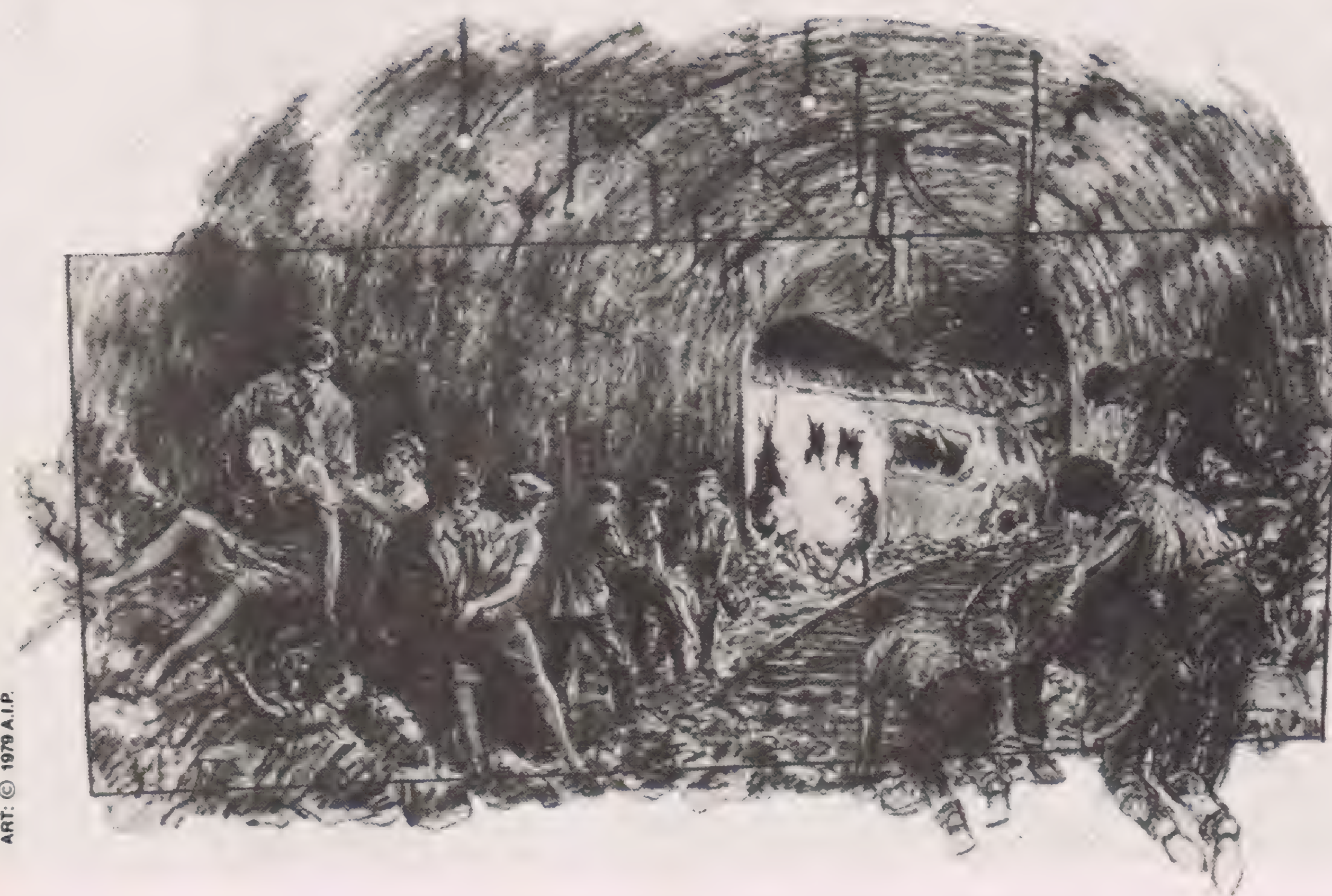
On the day of this recording session at MGM, a large earth mover has begun to excavate a 40' x 60' x 6' pit, where Gene Warren will destroy a miniature Hong Kong with a 250,000-gallon tidal wave... for the third time. The previous versions by Van der Veer and Cruse have been junked.

Does director Neame still expect to finish by the October release date?

"Oh yes, we'll make it," he says with surprising confidence.



Tracking probe intercepts the meteor.



ART: © 1979 A.I.P.

Top: Invading river mud begins to crush a subway car. Above: Original storyboard art for the subway sequence. Below: Editor, Carl Kress, assembling *Meteor* footage.

Meet the Editor

While the orchestra is having coffee, there is a chance to meet the editor of *Meteor*, Carl Kress—who has to deal most intimately with those black stretches of film where special-effects scenes are missing. He is found in Editing Room 6, a good quarter of a mile away, but still on the MGM lot.

The editing room is a large one, with a screen at one end and projection ports at the other, with racks and racks of completed portions and raw footage of *Meteor* lining the walls. Kress is at his work table, a wad of film in his fist.

"I started with *Meteor* in October of '77," he says with an exasperated smile. "We shot the principal photography in 90 days. Ronny [Neame] would generally come in on Saturdays and review my editing to date. He was mostly concerned with the mud sequences, the realignment [when U.S. and Russian teams realign the missiles aimed at the



PHOTO: DAVID HOUSTON

onrushing asteroid] and the launch sequences. We literally edited those together.

"I did *Audrey Rose* with Robert Wise. I'd say he left more than 85 percent of it just as I had done it. Neame makes more corrections than that; but still, you'll see the film largely as I've put it together.

"Really, *Meteor* has been easy to edit. Ronny damn near shoots exactly according to

(continued on page 50)

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Far right: Sean Connery, Natalie Wood, Brian Keith and Karl Malden are covered with mud after their narrow escape through the subway tunnels of New York. Right: Survivors climb to freedom over the rubble in a collapsed subway tunnel.

Below: Brian Keith, Natalie Wood and Sean Connery form an alliance of science between Russian and American space agencies. Lower: Politics prove to be as deadly an enemy as the meteor when conflicting world powers must reveal their military secrets to help avert disaster.



Above: Seated around the conference table on the set of *Meteor* are Sean Connery, Director Ronald Neame, Joseph Campanella and Karl Malden. Right: Ted Parvin, originator of *Meteor*.



PHOTOS: © 1979 A.I.P.

STARLOG INTERVIEW

Ted Parvin The Man Behind 'Meteor'

By JEFF SZALAY

The disastrous chunk of asteroid striking theaters nationwide was born in the mind of Ted Parvin a good many years ago. Under executive producer Sandy Howard, and with co-producer Arnold Orgolini, Parvin has realized *Meteor* on the screen with a top-notch cast: Sean Connery as Bradley, Natalie Wood as Tatiana, Karl Maldin as Sherwood, Martin Landau as Adlon, Brian Keith as Dubov, Joe Campanella as Easton, Trevor Howard as Hughes, Bo Brundin as Manheim, Richard Dysart as the Secretary of Defense, and

Henry Fonda as the President of the United States.

The film—which cost nearly \$20 million to produce—also contains numerous special-effects sequences the likes of which have not been crowded into a single motion picture since *When Worlds Collide*.

In an exclusive interview with *STARLOG*, producer Parvin provides a behind-the-scenes glimpse at his extraordinarily ambitious project.

STARLOG: This is the first motion picture you have produced in the science-fiction genre. How do you view the SF film field?

PARVIN: Well, I categorize what is com-

monly known to the layman as science fiction into three areas. *Fiction*, which would be *2001: A Space Odyssey*. It's an extension of what we think our future holds for us. *Science fact*, which is what we can relate to in everyday life, such as *Meteor*, which deals with an extension of what has already happened because we know meteorites have hit Earth in the past. And *fantasy*, which, of course, is *Star Wars*—where men shoot through space without being affected by gravity or the other laws of physics. But let me say that this in no way means I dislike science fantasy. I think without a doubt *Star Wars* is one of the best-directed, best-produced, best-thought-out



Elaborate special effects are promised by A.I.P. for *Meteor*. Six pieces of an asteroid shattered by a comet strike Earth. One lights up the sky as a meteor shower, another causes a tidal wave to engulf Hong Kong, another strikes Siberia, another the Alps and one smack into Manhattan. At left a look behind the scenes on one of the special effects sets for the Hong Kong sequence.

and planned projects that I have ever seen. And it certainly did do exactly what I think George Lucas was trying to do, and that's entertain the public. The film is phenomenal.

STARLOG: Would you like to produce a film like *Star Wars*? That is to say, science fantasy?

PARVIN: I really can't say because that's really not my forte. I like to deal with fact and build upon it... extrapolate... carry it to extremes but still within the area of fact.

STARLOG: Do you feel that the *China Syndrome* is closer to what interests you?

PARVIN: That's a wonderful picture. Along the same lines, this project I'm working on now is about an ice age. I focus not so much on the ice ages which have happened before but on the survival of humanity and what motivates man to live: what motivates an animal to overcome such extremes?

STARLOG: Tell us a bit about the special effects we'll be seeing in *Meteor*.

PARVIN: A comet strikes one of the Apollo asteroids and the asteroid shatters into millions of pieces. Six of these come toward Earth. One is merely a shower that lights the sky. Another falls into the Pacific Ocean and causes a tidal wave that wipes out Hong Kong and the entire coast of China and Australia. One strikes Siberia and creates a tremendous crater. And then one strikes the Alps and causes tremendous landslides that wipe out a whole valley. The fifth one strikes New York. I believe your imagination can paint a vivid picture of that.

STARLOG: The fifth one that strikes New York causes the underground command center to be flooded with hundreds of cubic yards of mud... were there any special problems in creating this scene?

PARVIN: Control is the biggest problem in making a picture where you have any special effect that is dangerous to the participants. Therefore, not only do you have to guard the actors, but the stunt people as well. And because of this, that particular sequence was the most dangerous in the picture.

The lack of competitive density between body and mud does not allow the body to float. If you slip and fall you go to the bottom and suffocate from the mud itself. We were at all times very conscious of where each actor was and tried to eliminate any mistake or mishap that would in any way endanger the personnel involved. Fortunately, we didn't have any injuries. It's one thing to work with models and quite another to work with real people and real dangers.

STARLOG: The sixth fragment that threatens the Earth is five miles in diameter. What did your research reveal as to the results of something that massive actually striking?

PARVIN: I feel we achieved a high degree of authenticity by extrapolating the knowledge that we have about meteorites that have impacted Earth. The crater outside Flagstaff, Arizona, is almost a mile across and 600 feet deep and was caused by a meteorite 80 feet in diameter. If you advance the figures and assume that the meteorite in our film is five miles wide, it could conceivably cause a crater more than seven miles deep and close to 150 miles in diameter. If that happened, forgetting for a moment what the earthquake factor would be, it would displace a tremendous amount of soil, and what would remain in the atmosphere would be enough to cause a minor ice age! That, by the way, is one of the theories accepted as possible cause for the last ice age. And also, for that matter, the flood mentioned in the Bible. But it's only a theory.

STARLOG: Is it reasonable to assume that New York would cease to exist as we know it?

PARVIN: The meteorite that strikes New York is 60 feet across; the answer would have to be yes. It causes such tremendous damage to New York that it threatens the lives of our people down in the communications center.

STARLOG: The philosophy of *Meteor* would seem to be one man or a group of people trying to get others to acknowledge and act upon an impending danger.

PARVIN: That's pretty much it in a nut-

shell. I won't negate the fact that a commercial endeavor of this size does motivate one to proceed in making the film. Nevertheless, in the back of your mind, you like to feel that you have more than just that motivating you. I have always been a great admirer of people like Isaac Asimov who have published numerous articles about the impending danger and the need for some sort of "watchdog" service in space to keep a lookout for these heavenly juggernauts. About 15,000 years ago an 80-foot meteorite struck Arizona in a very desolate area. Well, 15,000 years ago you could have struck anywhere on Earth and it would have been a desolate area. But today our cities are becoming crowded. Earth's population is increasing continuously and the chances of something that size hitting a major city, although still a great gamble, could happen. It would kill millions of people.

STARLOG: In *Meteor* you resolve this greatest disaster by having several nuclear missiles strike the largest meteor. Do you think this would be effective if a meteor were in reality threatening Earth?

PARVIN: Let's say that the idea was not a dream. We did not come up with a solution to this problem by sitting around with a group of people trying to work out a storyline. The actual solution to a meteorite on a collision course with Earth, being detoured by nuclear warhead weapons, was actually developed by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1968. It dealt with an Apollo asteroid called Icarus whose orbit came dangerously close to Earth. They assumed, for purely hypothetical purposes, that Icarus would strike Earth and therefore had the problem of how to detour it. Their solution was the use of nuclear missiles.

STARLOG: Let's hope that if something like this threatens Earth in the near future, the people who discover it will not have as much difficulty convincing the authorities to act as apparently the characters in *Meteor* have.

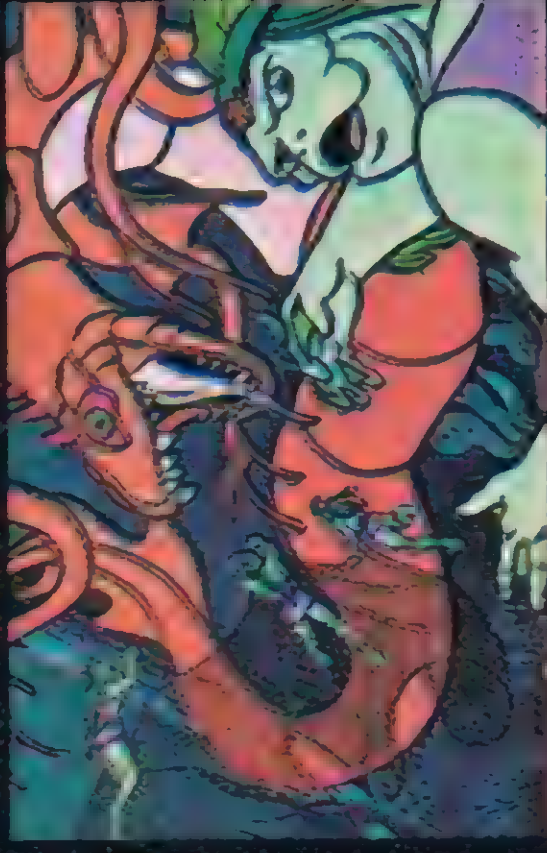
PARVIN: I would certainly hope so. Especially, if I'm still around. ★

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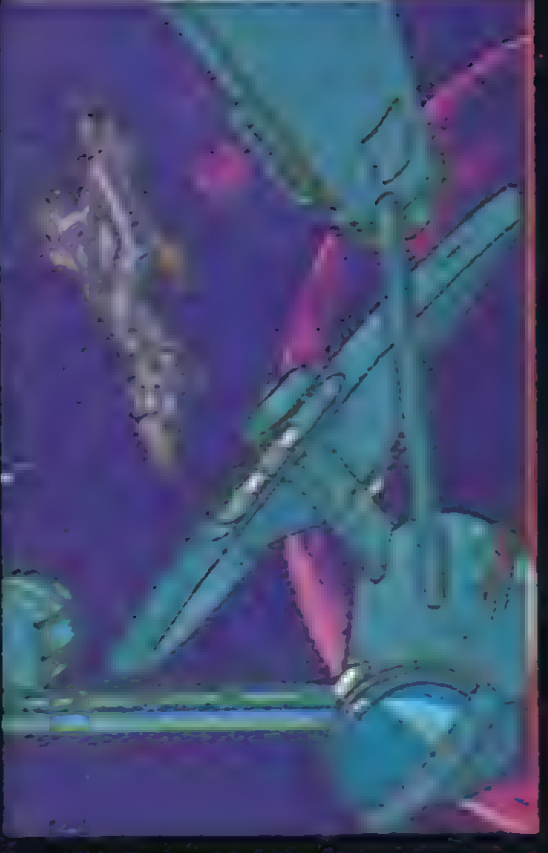
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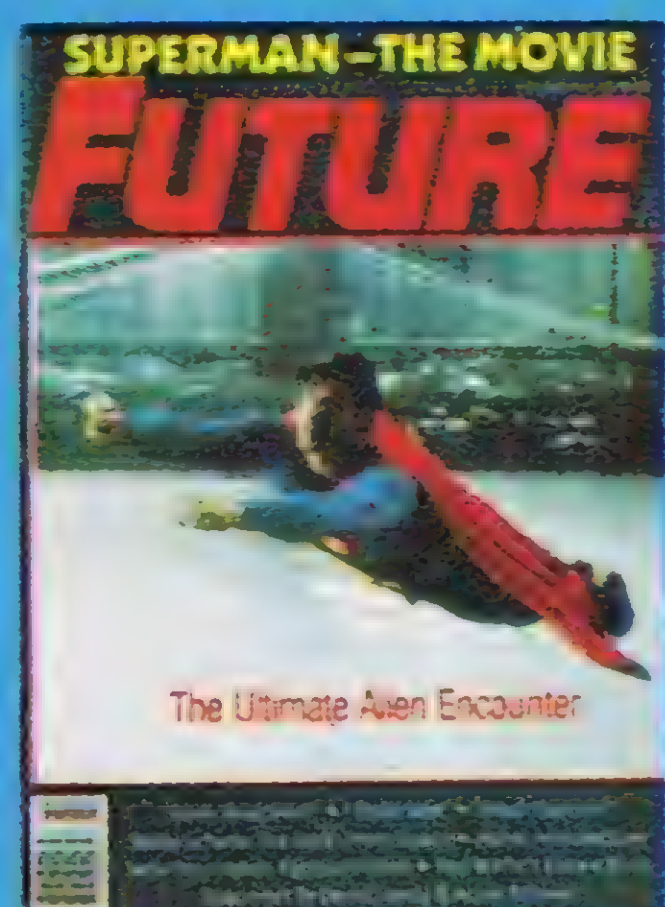
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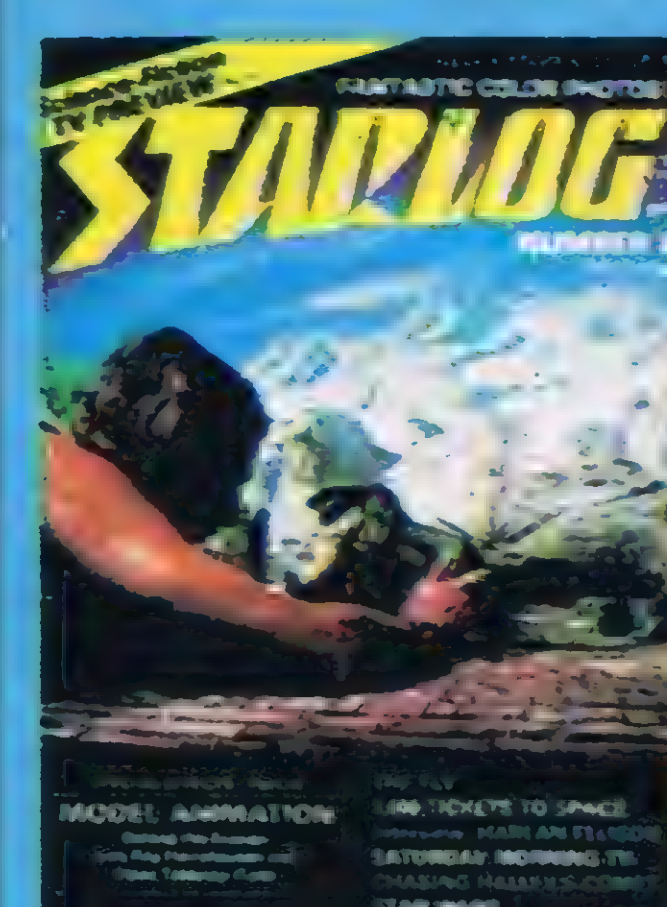
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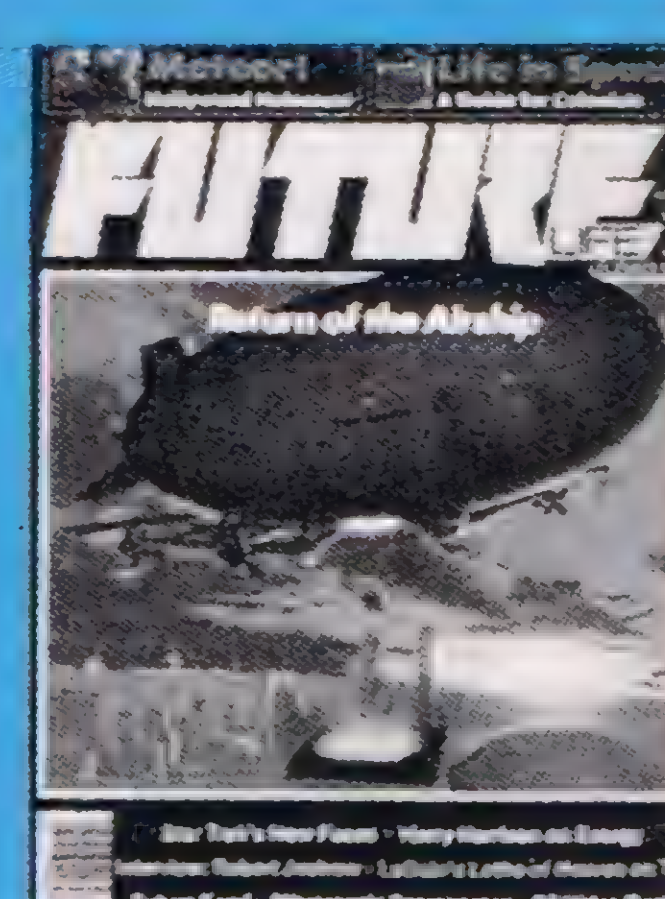
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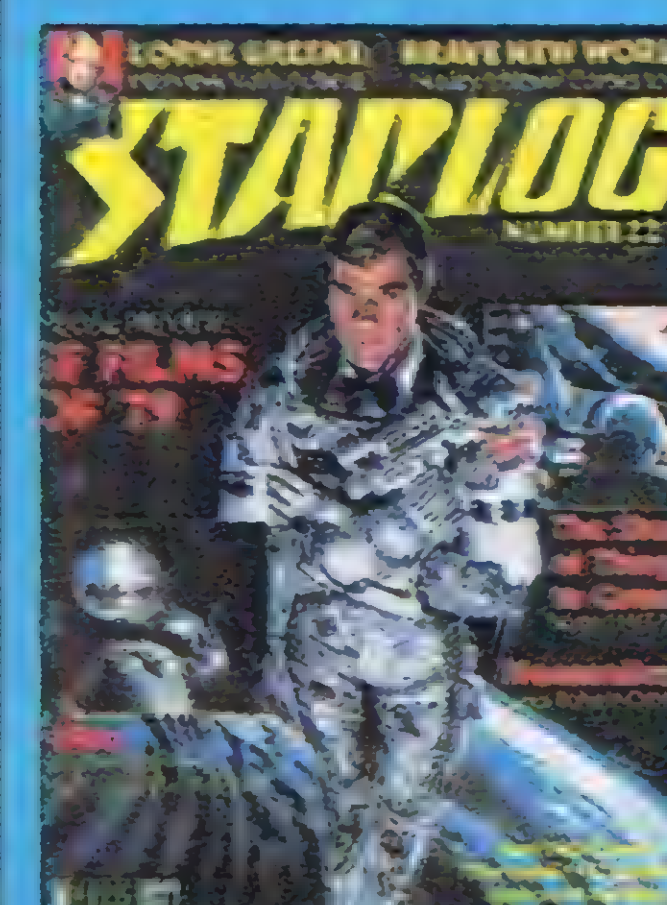
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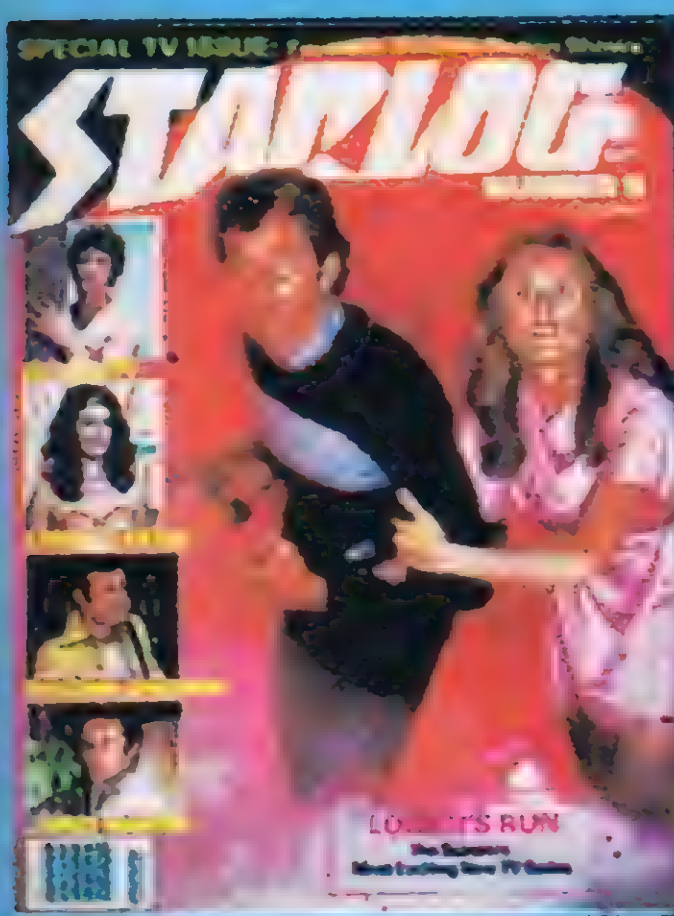
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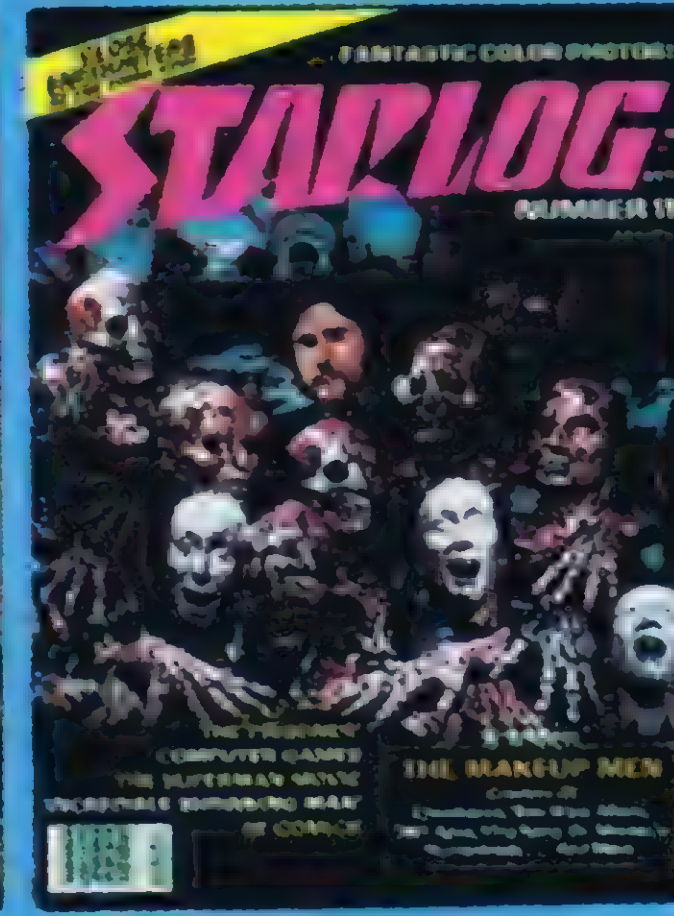
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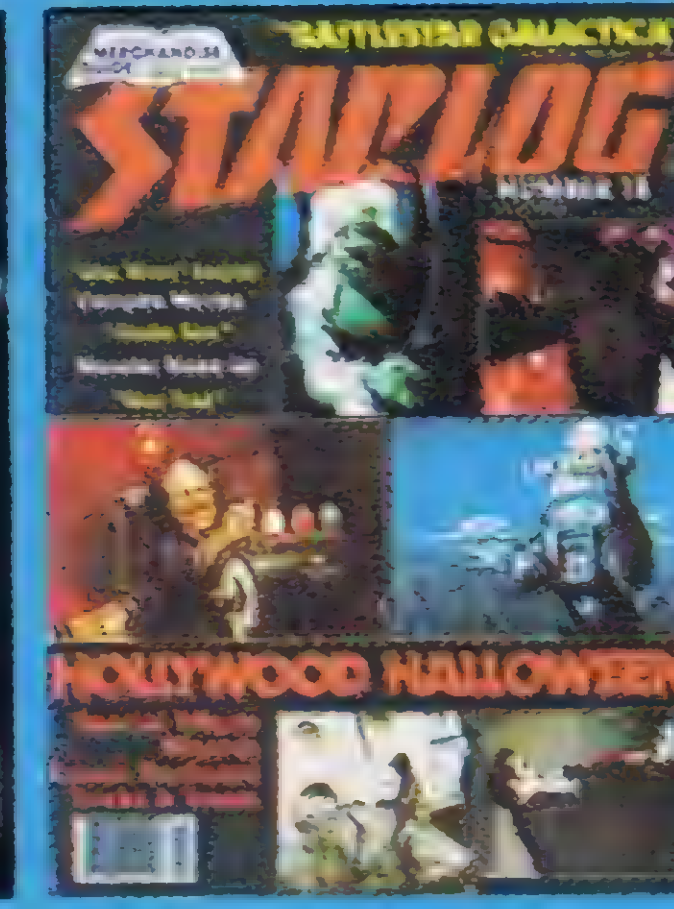
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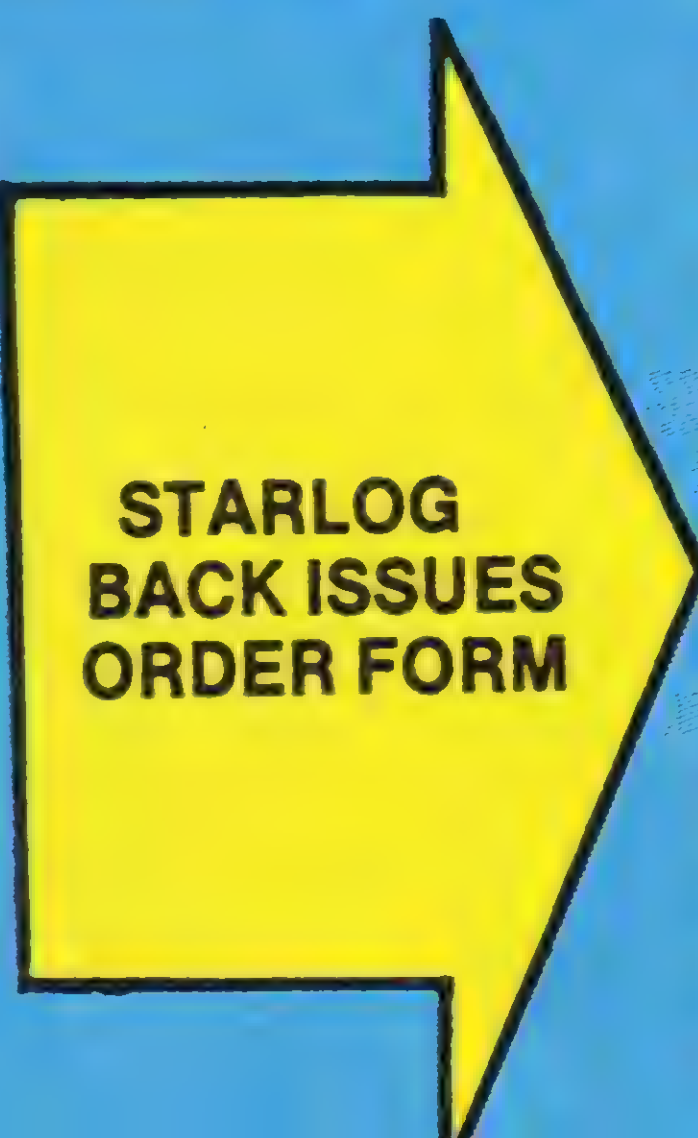
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Unhappy with the character she portrayed in the film, Erin Gray almost passed up the TV series.

By ALAN BRENDER

I really didn't want to do the series. I couldn't see myself living with that character. It was too painful. I knew I couldn't do it justice. When I saw the finished movie, I was amazed at the production and what a wonderfully timed film had been created. But I didn't like the character I played or how she was edited. It wasn't the editor's fault because there *wasn't* anything to work with. Nothing was written for Wilma."

So spoke Erin Gray, the actress who played Wilma Deering in the theatrical release of *Buck Rogers in the 25th Century*, at an interview in the Universal Studios' commissary, which took place during a break in the filming of the NBC-TV series—*Buck Rogers in the 25th Century*.

Taking Gray at her word about not wanting to appear in the series, the show's production and casting departments spent months screening scores of actresses to play Wilma. Filming of the series even began without Wilma being cast. Then, only days before this interview, Erin Gray received word that she was to have the part.

But with her negative attitude about the character she portrayed in the film, why did Gray agree to play it in the series? The answer is simple—the character's personality has been altered.

"In the movie," explains Gray, "I felt Wilma was too cold, too reserved. There was not enough warmth or femininity. We were very concerned in the beginning that people should believe that she could be a pilot. We played up that so much that people started to dislike her. So I'm stiff, which was the character. There are maybe *three minutes* where you see her face soften and you see vulnerability. But it never really had a chance

to surface, and that destroyed me.

"It was literally painful for me to come to work every day. Nobody seemed to sense the problem at the time. Later on people began to see the problem; they agreed that something had to be done."

Although unhappy about the character's personality, Gray says she had little direct input in changing it. "Maybe my complaints filtered down, and people began to see what was rubbing me right and what was rubbing me wrong. I don't know. But what they settled on is exactly what I had in mind."

"Now," elaborates Gray, "I think you can really identify with her, her problems, her relationships with people and the position of a woman giving orders to men. I don't want to bring women's liberation into this, but

there will be present-day controversial problems in the stories.

"And with the element of being bigger-than-life, you can have fun with it and not be brought down to the doldrums of being reminded of your own problems."

Gray contends that being more human doesn't detract from Wilma's strength to any significant extent. And she does enjoy playing strong women. "In fact," she says, "every character I've played has been career-oriented, intelligent, very strong."

From Vamp to Spy

In *Evening in Byzantium*, she played an aggressive, ambitious vamp. She was a lighting engineer in a *Rockford Files* segment; a spy in *Ultimate Imposter*, a TV pilot. And in an



Erin Gray's portrayal of Wilma Deering (opposite) compares favorably with the original characterization of Wilma by Constance Moore (above) in the serial.

PHOTO: © 1979 UNIVERSAL



PHOTOS: © 1979 NBC

Erin Gray has her hair pinned back in place after a break in shooting for the film. In the TV series, her look will be less severe, more sensual.

episode of *B.J. and the Bear*, she played Dr. Samantha Evans, who had a PhD. in engineering. As Dr. Evans she developed the ultimate law enforcement vehicle. It could track down escape vehicles by detecting the specific emission coming from their exhausts. Her invention also allowed law enforcement agents to determine how many culprits were in an escape vehicle by monitoring the number of heart beats.

Playing career-oriented women sits well with Gray, who views herself as a strongly driven person. "I think my strength comes," she explains, "from the fact that I've had an unusual life. I started work at 15, left home at 17, was married at 18. I made a good income while I was young. I traveled a lot. I'm still married to my childhood sweetheart, Kenneth Schwartz; I have a son, and I have a career. I'm trying to combine all that and make it work—possibly bring it to the show. I *am* the new woman."

At 15, Gray started looking around for a summer job, thinking of perhaps being a sales clerk in a department store or one of the summer jobs along those lines. Then a family friend suggested she go into modeling. Her mother was opposed to the idea, but eventually was won over when the friend offered to finance Gray through the initial stages. He said to her mother, "What do you have to lose?"

"He was right," says Gray. "No one had ever said to me that if I tried something, asked for something—the worst that could happen was that they would say no."

So Gray tried. First, she made a list of modeling agencies in Los Angeles. At the top of the list was Nina Blanchard, but Gray was reluctant to try her. She went instead to the number-three agency and was royally snubbed.

Across the street was the Nina Blanchard Agency; so Gray's mother suggested they go in. After being reminded of the friend's motto, Gray agreed. The secretary looked her

over very carefully—asked her to stand up, sit down, walk, even to bare her teeth. Finally, she was invited into Ms. Blanchard's office, where she received some rather uninspiring advice concerning an interview.

Gray went on the interview expecting nothing, and then went out to lunch with her mother's friend and decided to chalk the whole thing up to experience. Later in the day she called Ms. Blanchard to thank her.

"Where have you been?" barked Blanchard. "If you want to be a Nina Blanchard model, you have to phone in every single day. My dear, nobody walks off the street and gets two commercials the first time—no one!"

New York's Top Model

But Gray *did*, and her modeling career was launched. Eventually, she relocated in New York, where most modeling work is done. After several years of what she terms



In the film, Buck and Wilma were at odds. In the series they'll work as a team.

"primp" work, she began to take acting classes. She decided to incorporate the acting into her modeling work. That made her the top model in New York for three years, according to *Advertising Age* magazine.

"One year," says Gray, "it was myself, Susan Blakely, Jaclyn Smith and Veronica Hamill. I had very good company that year. They, of course, left for Los Angeles the next year, and I was all by myself. When Susie Blakely left for Los Angeles, she said to me, 'I did 28 commercials this year.' I said, 'My dear, I'm gonna beat your record.' She said, 'Good luck.'"

After 33 commercials in a single year, Gray said she stopped counting. She attributes the success to not having a definite look.

"I could give you the girl-next-door from Connecticut in Breck Shampoo—or the executive woman from Clairol; the woman who's strong and independent for the L'Oreal 'I'm with it' campaign. I can give you the sexy, warm, vibrant woman dancing and being very sultry for English Leather, and then go back to being a housewife for Sears where I play the dumpy girl throwing the bowling ball down the lane—plain and home-ly. But nobody would connect the Maybeline or the L'Oreal woman with the Sears or Woolite housewife. So that was all sort of acting."

When she felt herself comfortably ensconced in her profession, Gray took time out to have a son—Kevan, who is now three.

After having Kevan, Gray felt she had to come to the point where she must make a crucial career decision on whether to continue modeling or to go into acting on a full-time basis.

"I had two alternatives in acting while living in New York," she explained. "I could do soap operas or Broadway plays. I would love to do Broadway, but I have a family—and I'm very committed to my family. So that's out until my son is older and can take care of himself. With the soap operas, every time I went on an audition, they always saw me as a leading lady type, which was very complimentary, but I didn't want to tie myself down on a long-term contract."

"I had many discussions with my husband. One day he said to me after seeing me brooding about in the bathroom and hearing me bitching and complaining, 'Listen already. Go be happy. Do what you have to do.'"

So Gray set out for Los Angeles, tested for a part in *Go West Young Girl*, and was offered a contract. She accepted the contract, and shortly thereafter played the female lead in *Evening in Byzantium*. The day after production on that TV mini-series ended, she began shooting on *Buck Rogers* (the movie).

There are still times when Gray has to return to New York to do modeling jobs. "I'm still under contract to be a spokeswoman for Bloomingdales' Department Store, and I still do work for a few accounts such as Virginia Slims and Avon."

"I've worked hard at modeling, and it's something I'm proud of. I never felt I had to live down being a model. I don't see any reason not to continue with modeling."

(continued on page 63)

STAR TREK REPORT

... And the Cast Moves On

It's been *four and a half years* since Gene Roddenberry and I checked onto the Paramount lot to do "a small *Star Trek* movie." During much of that time, we found ourselves wondering if it were ever really going to happen, as followers of this column well know. There were times when we practically had Bekins' moving vans on stand-by. And now... *Star Trek—The Motion Picture* is just *days* away from becoming a reality. We did it! (*Heavy sigh.*)

But it could not have been accomplished without your support, and I'd like to take just a little of this space here to express my, and especially Gene Roddenberry's, thanks and heartfelt appreciation for *everything* you wonderful fans have done. Your enthusiasm, as expressed in mail campaigns and individual letters, conventions, clubs and organizations, fan publications and so on are really what made this motion picture happen. And soon, it will be *your* turn to reap the rewards of all your efforts. Enjoy, enjoy!

With the "answer print" (first test print of the completed picture, including all sound mixing) due to be delivered by mid-November, the editorial staff has begun their countdown. Film editor Todd Ramsey, his assistants Rick Mitchell and Randy Thornton, along with apprentice Darren Holmes, are working long hours to meet this deadline. As our opticals continue to be delivered, they must be coordinated with the work of these people on the editorial staff, as well as with sound editor Richard Anderson and others.

Initial release of the film in English-speaking countries will be followed a few months later by release in foreign countries around the world. Present plans call for dubbing into German, Italian, Spanish and French, and possibly Portuguese. Other countries will probably have subtitles in their own native language.

Even in this time of post-production, we are still receiving some new footage. Recently, a spectacular space-walk scene was filmed with Leonard Nimoy and Bill Shatner, and this now appears to be the last live-action filming of the movie. Special new spacesuits had to be constructed, and filming was done at the optical house soundstage, rather than on the Paramount lot. It promises to be one of the most exciting sequences in the film.

Now that the cast have completed their filming, many have taken the opportunity to pursue their acting careers and other interests. Bill Shatner recently completed a very successful run of the critically acclaimed play *Otherwise Engaged*. So well-received was this presentation, that the run had to be extended



DeForest ("Bones") Kelley: Relaxing in the Sun and answering fan mail.

several weeks.

Leonard Nimoy just finished a two-hour movie for television, which will air on CBS this season. The film is called *Seizure*, and stars Leonard as Dr. Connought, a neurosurgeon. Penelope Milford plays his patient in need of brain surgery to remove a tumor. (Move over, Dr. McCoy!) The movie was produced and directed by Jerry Isenberg, whom you may remember was once assigned to be the executive producer of an earlier-planned *Star Trek* movie... an ironic twist, since Leonard's recent film *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* was directed by the man who was assigned to be the director on that same *Star Trek* project (Phillip Kaufman). Talk about *déjà vu*!

DeForest Kelley has been relaxing in the California Sun this summer, answering the many fan letters he receives from all over the world. If you are interested in becoming a member of De's official fan club, you can write to the president: Karolyn Popovich, 1000 South Bryant, Denver, Colo. 80219. The membership packet includes a membership card, photographs, buttons, a newsletter, "Southern Style," and a zine with the droll title of "I'm a Doctor, Not a..."

Steven Collins, who plays Commander Willard Decker in *ST—TMP*, has barely had time to breathe following the completion of his work in that film. He recently completed a television movie on location in Virginia, and is now working on a new motion picture, *Loving Couples*, for Time-Life Films, in which he has a starring role. Others in the cast are Shirley MacLaine, James Coburn, Susan Sarandon and Sally Kellerman. David Suskind is executive producer, and Jack

Smight directs. Watch for it later this year.

Persis Khambatta has had many script offers and is currently selecting her next role. She's been experimenting with new hair styles now that her "Ilia" baldness has been replaced by her own dark, silky hair. She recently purchased her very first car—a beige Mercedes with the license plate, PURRSIS. This obvious pun was actually her *second* choice—it seems that someone had already acquired PERSIS. Another Persis? It is possible, since cast member Majel Barret once checked and found at least 10 other MAJEL licenses in the State of California!

Speaking of Majel, she has also been quite busy, recently playing the role of a bank president in a two-hour movie for television which stars Angie Dickenson and is scheduled to air this season on CBS. And Majel has also received special recognition for her sports skill—she's an expert golfer, and in the annual women's golf tournament at LaCosta, Calif., Majel carried off the top honors. As women's champion for 1979-80, she received a beautiful trophy and a silver casserole.

Other cast members have also been active. Grace Lee Whitney has been recording some of her original music, attending conventions, taking drama workshops and practicing her roller skating. She's one of the best disco roller skaters around; and joined by her husband Jack Dale, she enjoys showing her stuff every Monday night at a local rink which holds an invitation-only "celebrity night." Others whirling around the rink with Grace have been Jon Voigt, Cher, Earl Holliman and Valerie Harper.

George Takei dropped by the *Star Trek* offices last week for a press interview, and persuaded Gene Roddenberry and myself to join him the next morning at 7:30 a.m. for George's favorite sport—running. Gene's in good shape, having begun a program of running many months ago, but your intrepid reporter spent most of the time huffing and puffing, watching the two men running circles around the soundstages. Gene and George have had several early morning runs since then—I'm still catching my breath!

Gene has just completed the novelization of the *Star Trek* script. Its tentative title is *Star Trek—The Novel*, and it will be available from Pocket Books at the same time as the picture's release. It's a very exciting book, with many additional sequences not included in the motion picture. It also gives the reader more insight into the *Star Trek* characters by the man who created them, and there are some thought-provoking glimpses into the basic Roddenberry philosophy. ★

Martin Bower: A Rising Star in the World of Miniatures

By DAVID HIRSCH

Since the dawn of motion pictures, when the first science-fiction story was captured on film, special-effects men have been called upon to create what exists only in the imagination. Like their counterparts of yesteryear, the cinema magicians of today require the use of model builders to construct spacecraft, alien landscapes and other forms of fantasy.

With the quality of today's technology, the model builder has become a master craftsman. The featureless towers in *Flash Gordon* have been replaced with the finely detailed miniatures, such as the city in *Logan's Run*. The smooth-skinned spacecraft of the 1950s have been replaced with the complex, weird and wonderful galactic designs seen in such productions as *Space: 1999*, *Star Wars* and *Alien*.

In 1974, British producer Gerry Anderson was involved in the production of the first 24 episodes of *Space: 1999*. He received a letter and a package of photographs from a young model builder named Martin Bower. Impressed by the quality of his work, Anderson replied, setting up a meeting between Martin and *Space: 1999*'s special-effects director, Brian Johnson.

Last Enemy." "We often redressed models for other episodes, simply because there wasn't enough time to build a new one," Bower relates.

As a result of his success with that initial assignment, Bower was hired to continue to build models for the series. It had been the answer to his life-long dream. "I love the idea of making the imaginable a reality through films and SFX. I used to go see any film with models in it and sit through the film more than once at a time."

The Anderson-Kubrick Influence

Bower attributes his love for models and model making to his childhood exposure to *Supercar*, *Fireball XL5* and many of the other Gerry Anderson SF puppet shows of the 1960s. His drive for fine detail in his work may be the result of his admiration of Stanley Kubrick. "I love his films and I just don't mean the obvious—*2001*. The standards he's set in his pictures are very high. The soundtrack, the photography, everything's just perfect, and I admire what it is in a man that can keep him turning out that kind of film and put the same enthusiasm into all the different subjects he's covered."

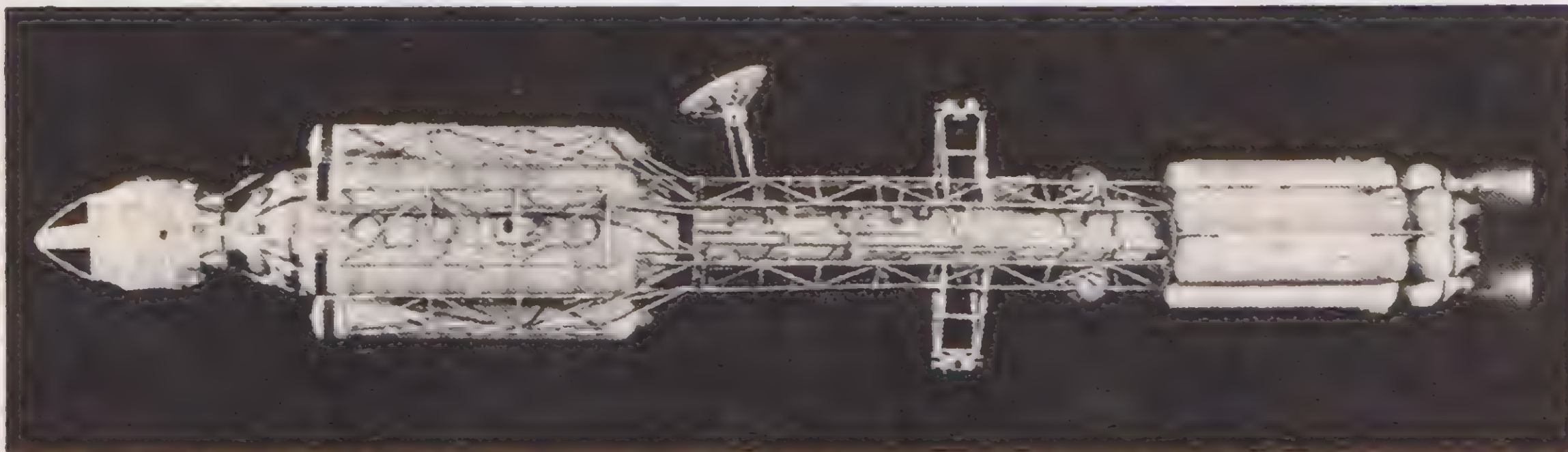
Bower has also been a fan of stop-motion photography ever since he saw Ray Harryhausen's *First Men in the Moon*.

"I learned my craft the hard way—by trial and error. When I was a boy, I was always the odd one out in regards to my hobby, as many of my friends considered models as toys. They thought it was childish." Despite such peer-group pressure, Bower's love for model building prevailed and he spent the next few years of his life struggling to develop his modeling techniques.

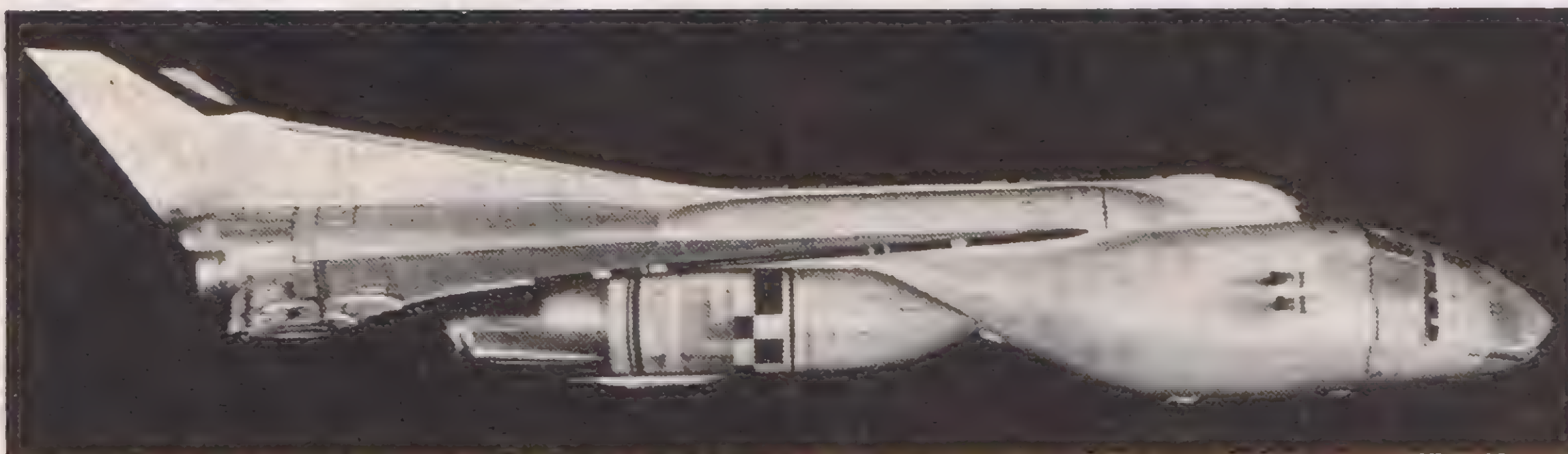
After finishing school, he landed a job with a company that manufactured display models. His three-year association there gave him a chance to develop welding and lathe capabilities, techniques which would become vital to his work in film a few years later.

With this continual exposure to model fabrication, Bower was able to discover what were the best materials to utilize. "This, of

course, depends totally on the shape of the model and how many versions of that model you have to build. For instance, if a model has flat sides and no curves, I would use plexiglass, since this is strong and is a great base to stick to. The gun tank built for the *Space: 1999* episode 'Taybor' is a classic example. If the shape is curved, however, or has rounded corners, then it is carved in wood. Jelutong, the pattern-maker's wood, is used for this. The nose cones of the *Swift*, *Superswift* [both *Space* craft] and *Altair* [built for *Day After Tomorrow*] were solid wood. Now, if more than one model is required, then you start making glass fiber molds. Other than that, brass is used for girder work; it is strong and easily soldered together. Sometimes a model will be a combination of all these techniques. It all depends on the shape.



The 65" long model of the *Ultra Probe* for 1999's "Dragon's Domain."



The "Collision Course" shuttle designed by Johnson, built by Bower

"Brian liked my work and gave me my first real break for which I shall always be grateful," Bower recalls. "He sent me a script from the episode 'Alpha Child' and asked to see what I could come up with."

A few days later, Bower returned to Bray Studios with his interpretation of the alien spacecraft that would bring the fugitive aliens to Moonbase Alpha. Johnson approved the design and gave him the go-ahead to produce two versions of the craft—one 30 inches long and another five feet in length.

For the alien battlecruiser that appears in the finale of "Alpha Child," Johnson purchased a six-foot, eight-inch model Bower had built some years earlier that was heavily influenced by the craft in *2001*. This same craft also appears in the episode "War Games" and was later redressed for "The

PHOTOS: © 1973 ITC ENTERTAINMENT

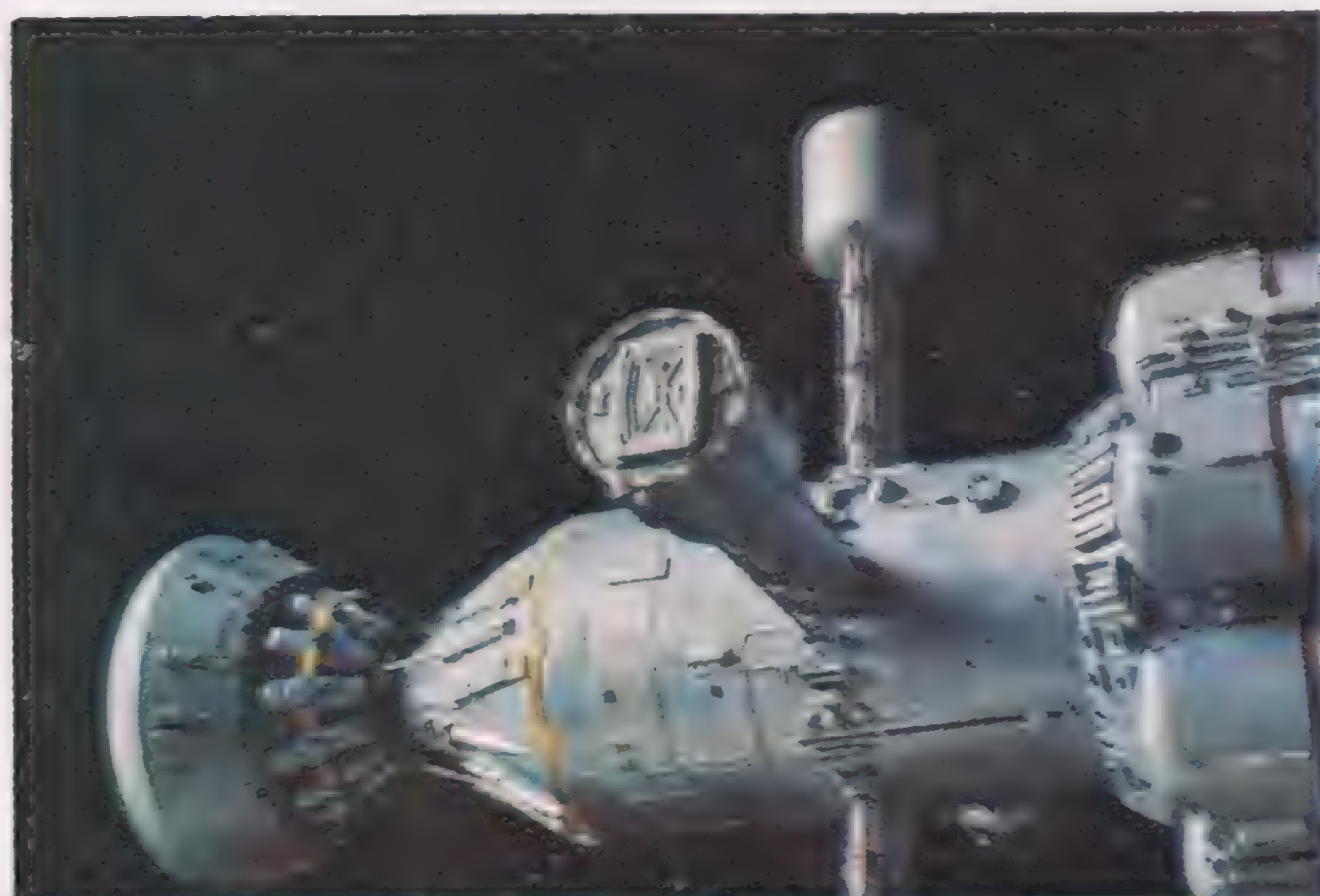


The 65" *Superswift*. The landscape was built by Bower.



PHOTOS: COURTESY MARTIN J. BOWER

Bower touches up the four-inch "Baby Gwent"



Fine detail can be seen on this close-up of the alien ship from the *Space: 1999* episode "Dragon's Domain." While the nose is obviously an Apollo space capsule, more sharp-eyed model makers will notice a door from the 2001 Moon Bus hobby kit on the docking port.



The detail is painted on these gliders from "Immunity Syndrome."

The High Costs of Model Making

"I suppose the two greatest expenses in model building are the cost of the large amounts of paint required and, of course, the number of hours you must put in. Plexiglass, metal and wood can often be purchased cheaply as scrap and off-cuts from big companies.

"Pieces from plastic hobby kits can be used for dressing along with many old radio components, especially the insides of old valves. I often try to get away from using too many kit bits because so much is being done with them."

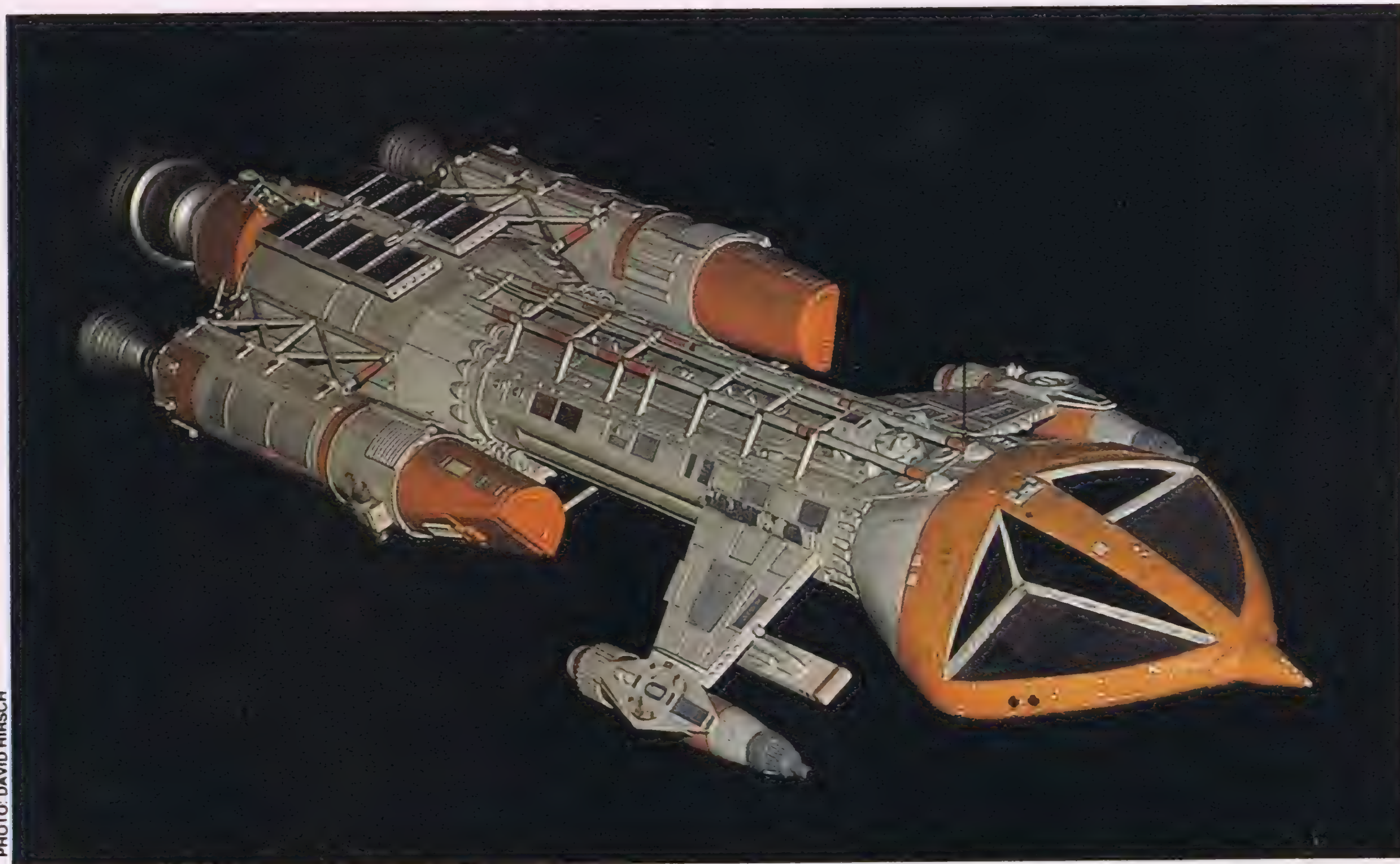
Some of the models Bower built for *Space: 1999* were as small as three inches long (the suspended-animation coffins for "The Exiles") and as large as 12 feet (the *Daria* for "Mission of the Darians"). Depending on the materials involved in their construction, these models weigh anywhere from a few ounces to 30 pounds.

Bower was called upon to use his creative skills on no less than 50 different models of all shapes and sizes for the

48-episode TV series. "Many of the models" he recalls, "were of my own design. The *Eagle* was Brian Johnson's. Of course, that was before I came along. I worked alone on many of them, but I'd discuss ideas with Brian. He gave me sketches of some ideas he had and I would interpret them. The *Hawk* was part his and part mine, as was *Voyager One*, *Gwent* and the *S.S. Daria*."

"When designing, I don't really refer to any reference material for basic ideas and shapes beyond the descriptions in the script. I try not to do the same thing twice myself and, as far as possible, steer away from being influenced. It's easy to be influenced unintentionally. Many times I've thought I had an original design and someone says it looks like this or that. I do have definite ideas of what I want a thing to look like, often from my first idea for a model. I once looked at a photo of a fly's eye and used that as a reference on the construction of the ship for 'The Dorcons.' The domes on the side resembled such eyes."

PHOTO: DAVID HIRSCH



One of the most popular models on *Space: 1999*, the *Hawk*, built by Bower from a design created by both Bower and Brian Johnson. Seen here is the 30" model.

PHOTO: 1973 ITC ENTERTAINMENT



Above: The 8" long escape craft for the "Last Enemy." Right: The 24" shuttle used in *The Day After Tomorrow*. United Nations insignia was added shortly before filming.

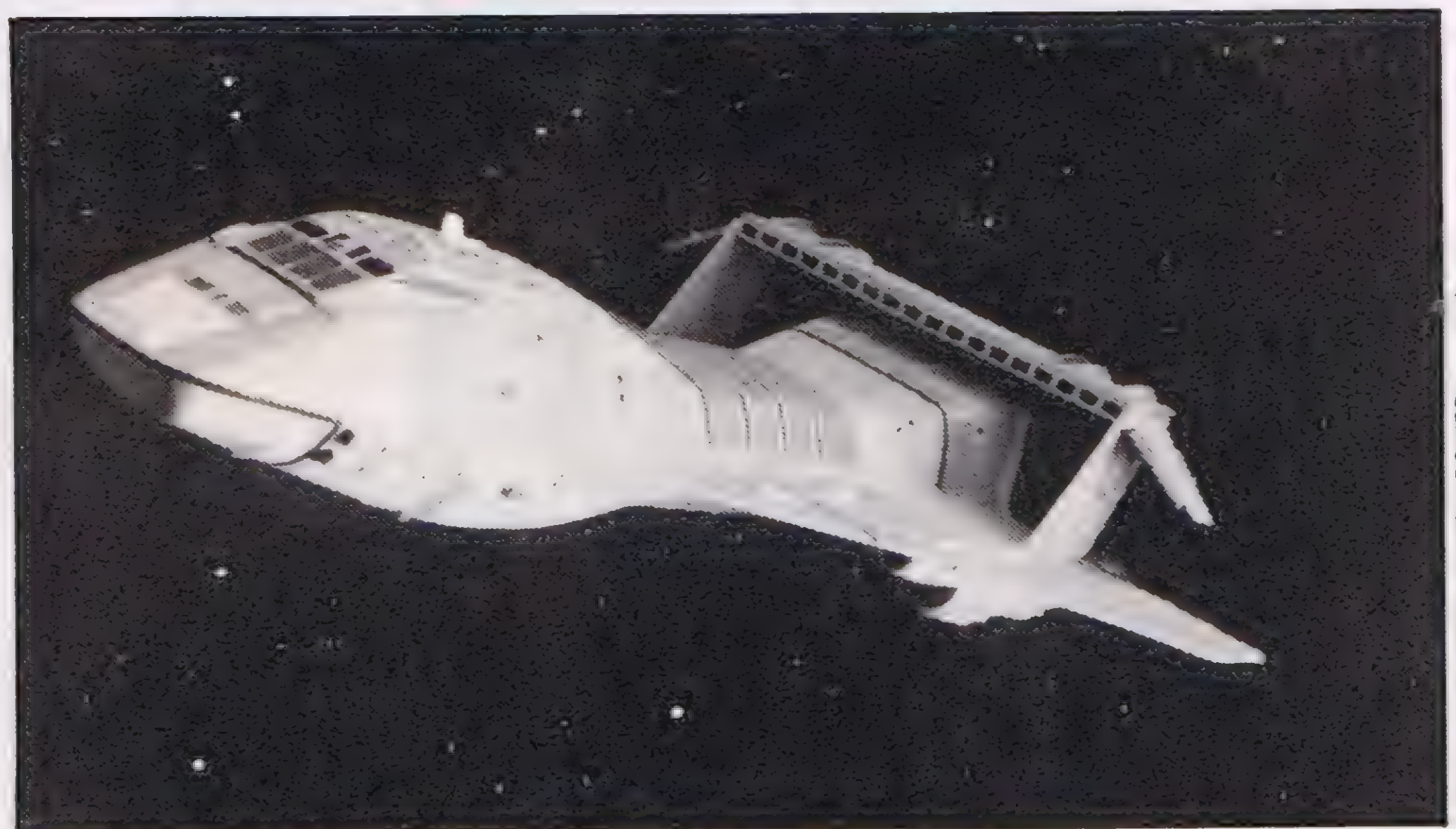


PHOTO: COURTESY MARTIN BOWER

Bower's Favorite Model

During the break between the filming of the first and second seasons of *Space: 1999*, Bower continued to design and build models to keep in practice. Many of these models, created solely for his own pleasure, were eventually purchased by Brian Johnson for use on the second season of *Space*. At the same time, Bower was also asked to build eight models for Anderson's TV special *The Day After Tomorrow* (*Into Infinity*). [See STARLOG #26]. It was during this production that Bower designed and built what he feels is his most challenging model to date, the photon-powered spacecraft *Altare*s. "It took ages to build, and it nearly finished *me* off. I sliced a chunk out of my hand while cutting the metal tube inside."

The *Altare*s wasn't the only challenge Bower had to face in his new professional career. On *Space: 1999*, he found that "trying to get models ready, designing, building and delivering them, often all in 10 days, was really *the* challenge. Thinking up new ideas gets more and more difficult. The pressure was really on all through season one and it didn't ease up on season two."

After completing *Space: 1999*, Bower moved on to work on the BBC-TV series *Doctor Who*, *Blake's 7* and *Mrs. Noah*, and he acted as both designer and model builder on the Thames Television series *The Tomorrow People*. Brian

Johnson again put Martin's work on film for the theatrical features *The Medusa Touch* and *Alien*. He also did the model work on Gerry Anderson's commercial for Jif Dessert Topping, called *Alien Attack*.

Bower is currently devoting all his time to creating models for Dino De Laurentiis' *Flash Gordon*. However, he admits that model building isn't all he would like to do in films. "Well, I'd love to do more landscapes and sculpture work. I do a lot of the latter at home in plasticene, usually figures and creatures. I'd love to do more of this for films. I used to build landscapes to photograph my models in and it's great building up rock formations in plaster and getting it in a real state. It makes a nice change from the intricate work I normally do. I would also love to direct special effects on a film of a science-fiction nature and see my ideas come to life."

And what is Martin Bower's advice to others who yearn to be model builders? "Just keep practicing—which if you're keen you'll do anyway—but if you intend to take up model making professionally, learn other skills related to modeling, like metal work and carpentry. These will prove to be invaluable later on. Many times I've had young lads say, 'I'm a model maker,' and you ask them what they've done and they show you an Airfix kit they've made. There's nothing wrong with the kit, mind you, but, really, there is a lot more to it than that." ★

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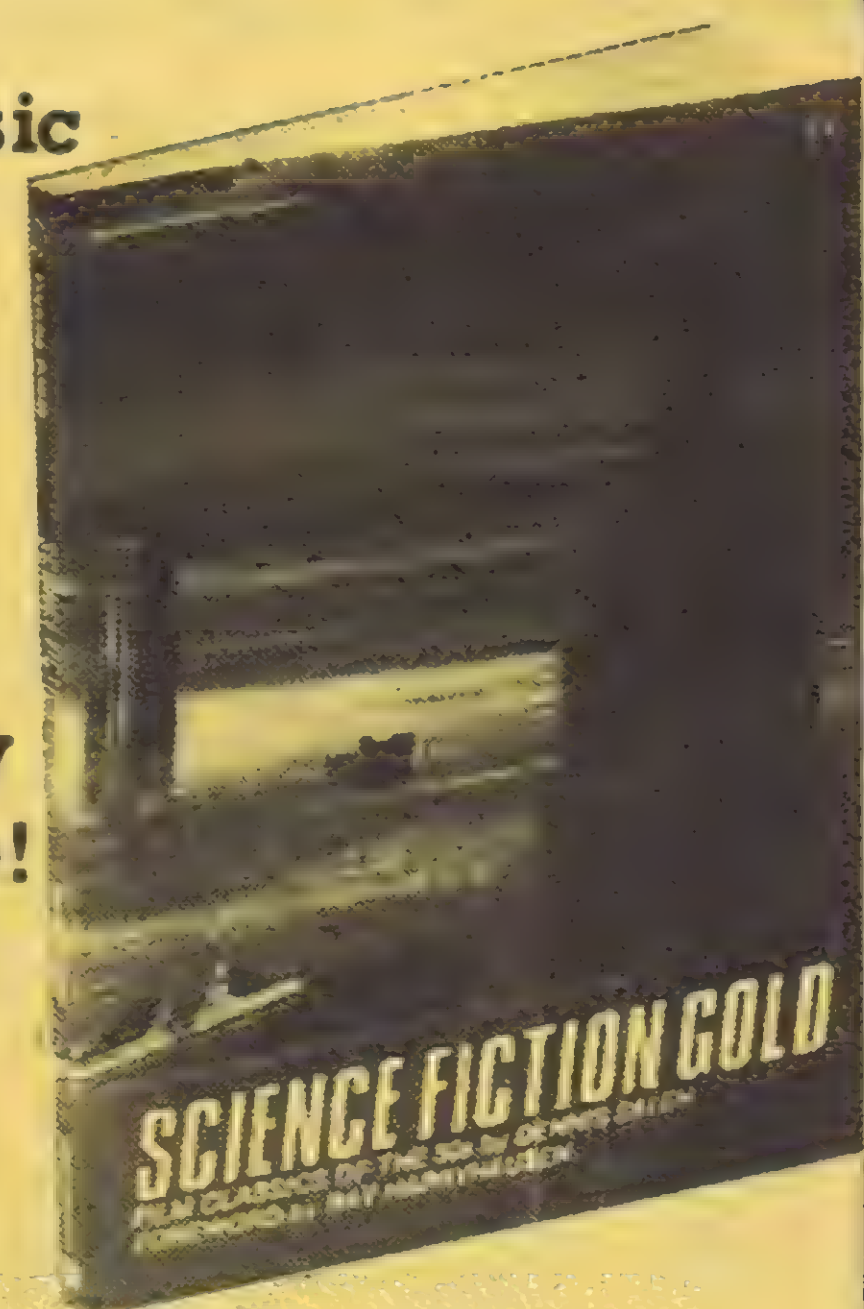
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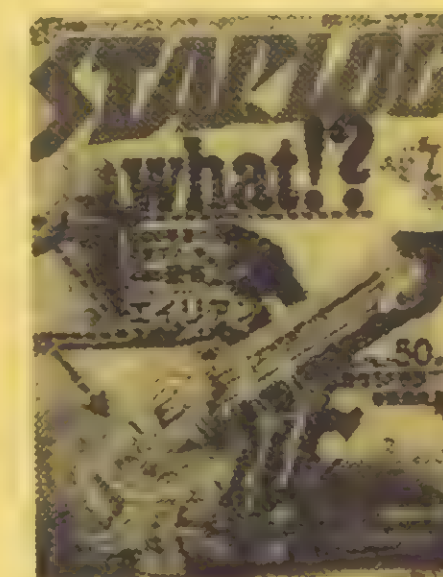
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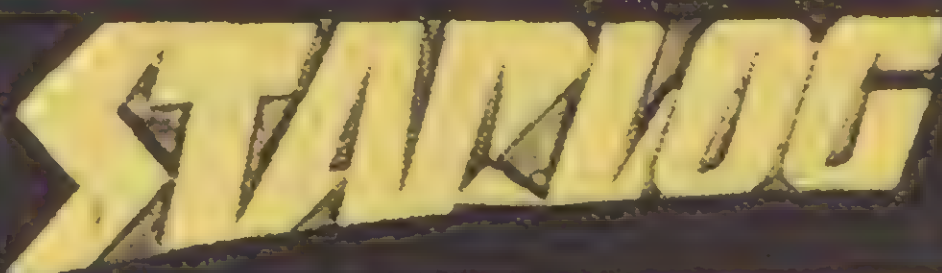
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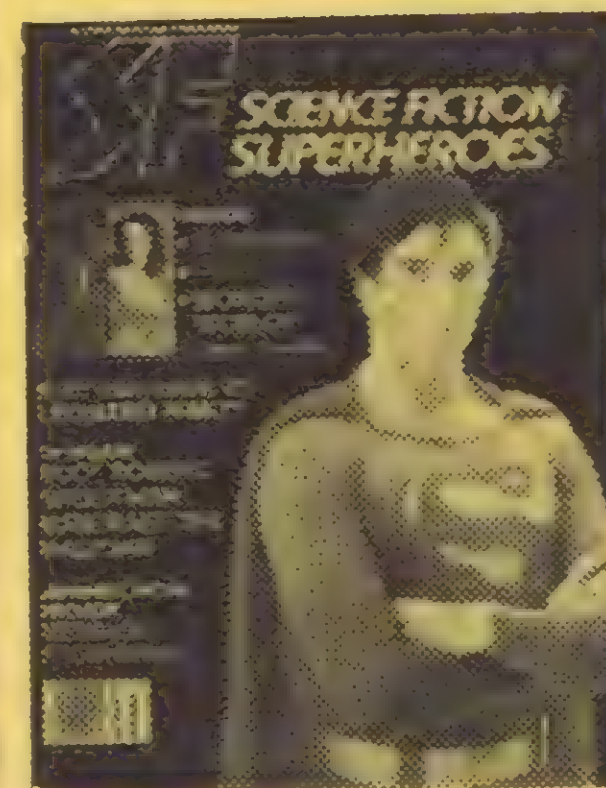
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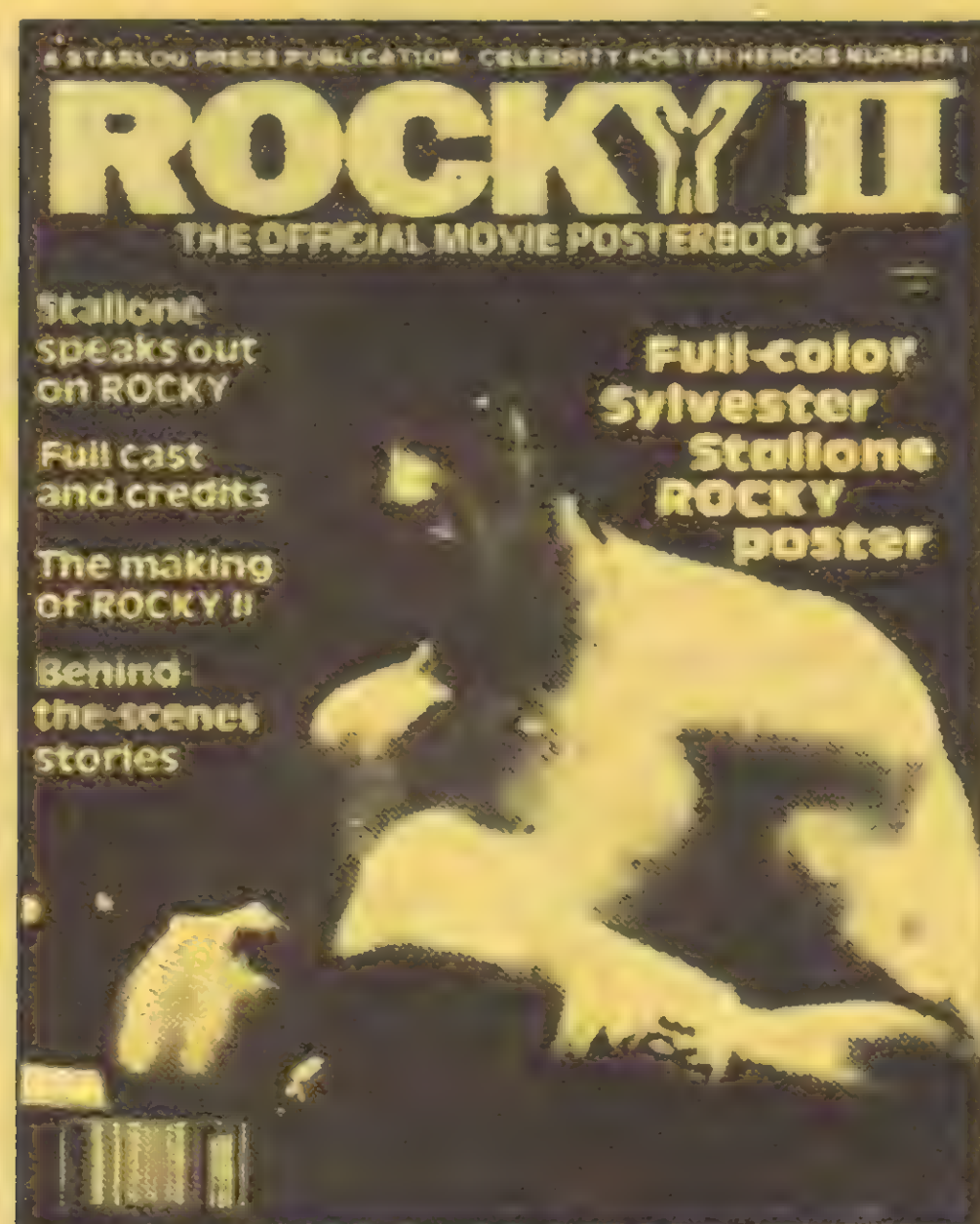


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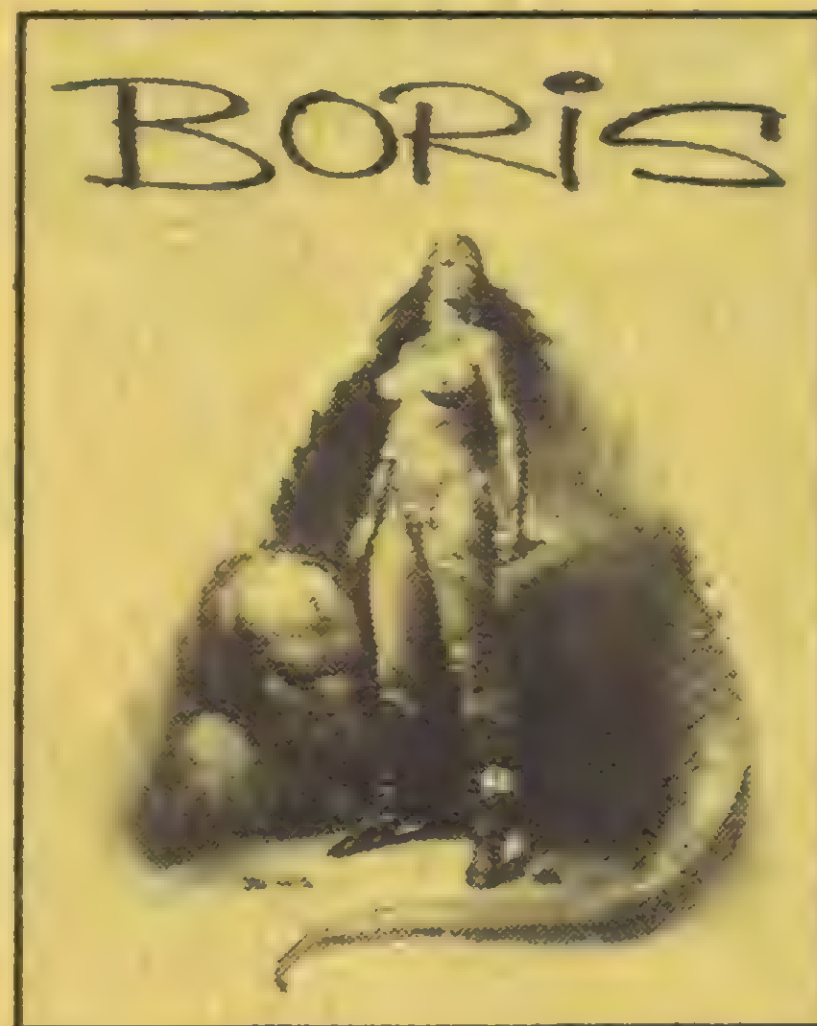
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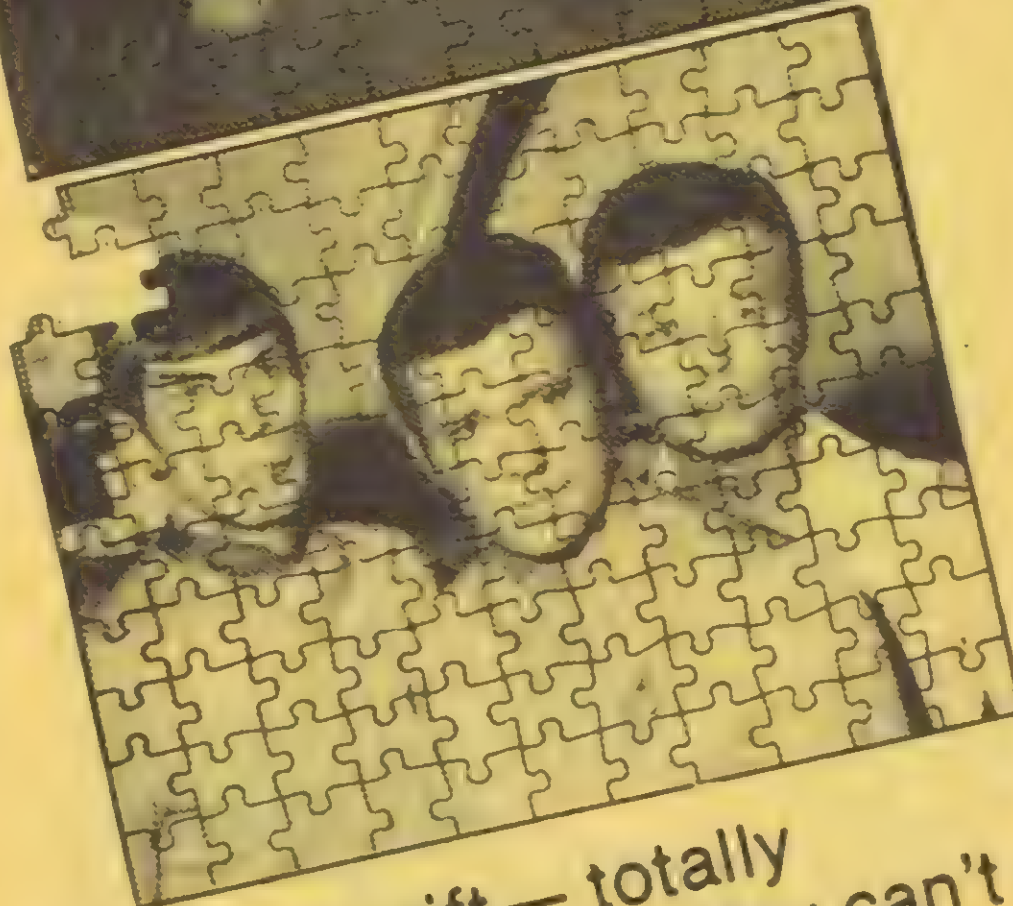
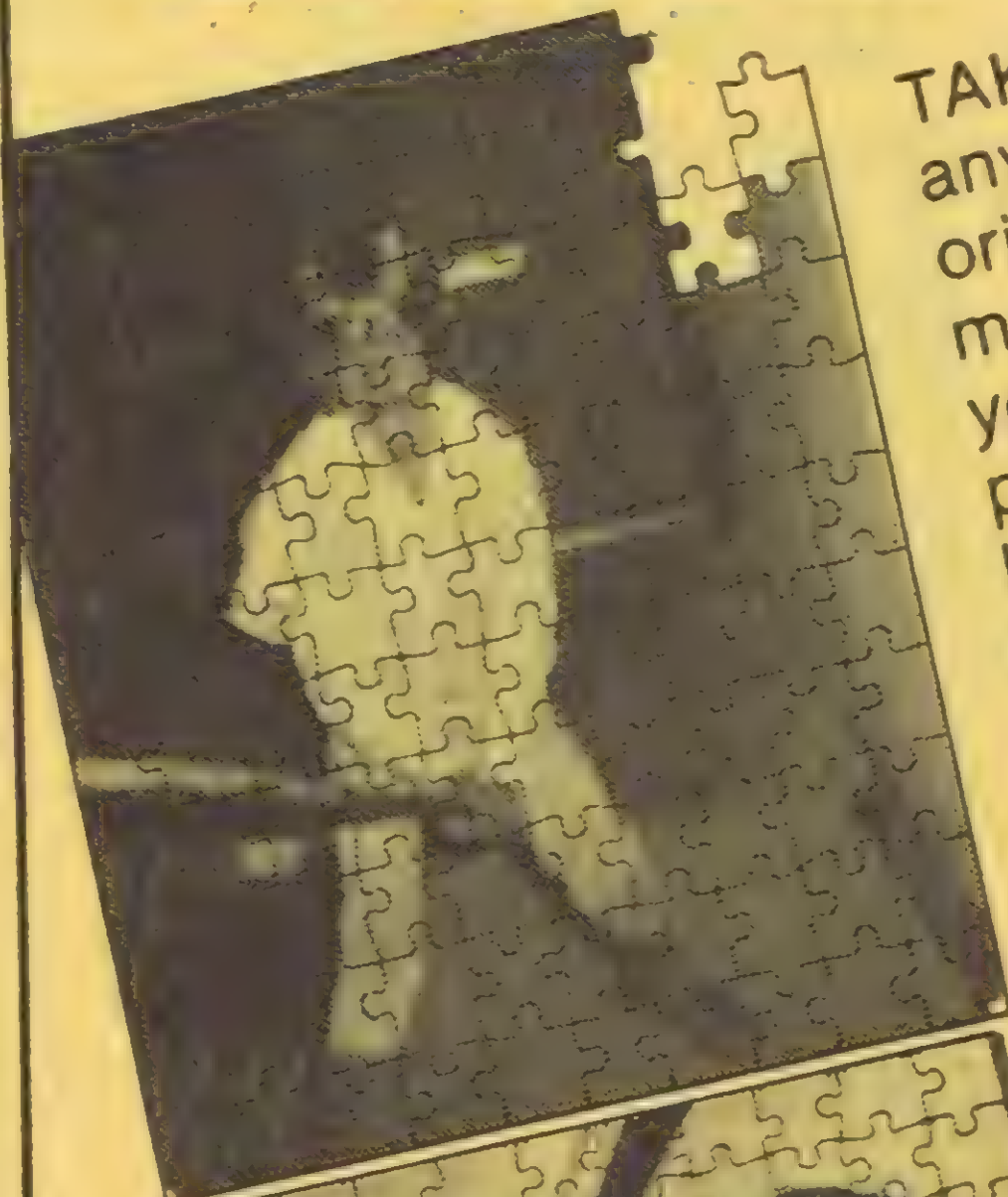
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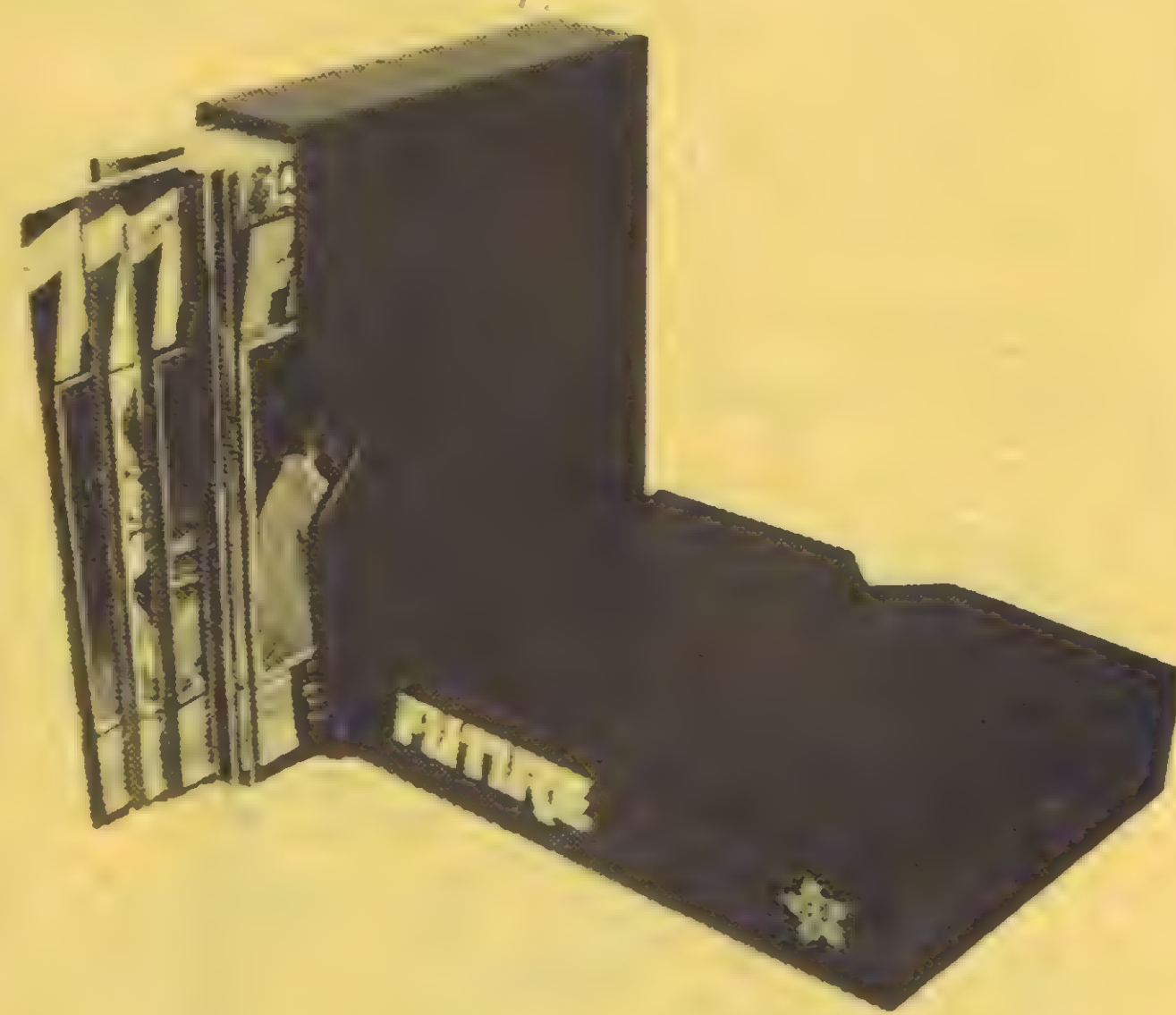
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SF VEHICLES

Meet the man who builds science-fiction vehicles for movies and TV.



Dean Jeffries Creating the Future on Wheels

BY DOUG CREPEAU

If ever you should be driving into Hollywood by way of the northern approach through Cahuenga Pass—*be warned*. As you round the first curve after Barham Boulevard you will find yourself staring straight into the steely muzzles of two 50-caliber machine guns, while 14 two-inch rockets zero in on you. The entire arsenal is mounted on a sleek, silvery, futuristic vehicle; it looks like it just rolled out of a science-fiction movie. And, as a matter of fact, *it did!*

As you look a little closer, beyond the ray guns and rockets and to the sign above the entrance, you'll notice that you are actually in front of Dean Jeffries Automotive Styling—the creation center of numerous spacey movie

vehicles. Seated in his front office, owner Dean Jeffries is surrounded by paneled walls covered with movie stills of his fantastic machines in action.

Jeffries remembers how he first got started in the motion-picture prop business. "I kind of eased into it. I was building cars for movies and TV series for quite a while before the producers felt they could bank on me to take on a project. I started off by doing stunt work and from there, to rigging cars—putting cameras on them and things like that."

Though Jeffries is now pretty much out of the stunt business, he recently finished some scenes for TV's *Vega\$*. "I also just came back from a week of car commercial stunts for

Goodyear with Richard Petty, Cale Yarborough, Bobby Unser and Dan Gurney. I keep up with that all the time because cars are the main thing in my life."

Jeffries' first futuristic vehicle was the Moon buggy, designed for the James Bond thriller *Diamonds Are Forever*. "That was kind of an oddball," he recalls. "They told me it was going to come out of a crater and go running through the desert. Well, it ended up that this thing had to go running all over the place—just like a dune buggy."

As it turned out, the Moon buggy had many never-seen capabilities which didn't show up on the screen. "We jumped it off a cliff. We had special wheels shaped like a

SF VEHICLES

teacup with the rims facing outward from the vehicle. They cost about \$4,000 apiece. But they were only capable of handling eight to 12 mph., and we were running the Moon Buggy at 50 to 60 mph."

And then there were the buggy's \$14,000 metal claw arms that were never used in the film either. "They did a twisting action, raised

back and forth and the hand opened and closed. There were four different motions to the arms that could be operated from inside. They were all done with cable-and-pulley linkage."

Sometimes, even when Jeffries' vehicles are actually used to their functional potential in a film, the result is still disastrous for the

builder. Such was the case with the vehicles used in *Death Race 2,000*. "They really crashed them up, blew them up and burned them," Jeffries laments. "There was nothing left."

Many of the spacey cars used in *Death Race* were built around real car chassis. "The Roman Lion car was a Fiat. The Calamity Jane Bull was a Corvair. The Gangster



The Landmaster vehicle on the *Damnation Alley* set. That's Dean Jeffries behind the wheel.



The Frankenstein Alligator from *Death Race 2000*—built on VW innards.



The Calamity Jane Bull from *Death Race*; built on a Corvair.

ALL PHOTOS: COURTESY DEAN JEFFRIES AUTOMOTIVE STYLING

Machine Gun car, the Frankenstein Alligator car and the Herman the German V-1 Buzz Bomb cars were all Volkswagens. The VW is convenient for movie work. You don't need the whole water-cooling system to make it work, and the automatic transmissions we install in them make them very easy for the actors to drive."

Though the vehicles Jeffries has built for SF sets come in all shapes and sizes, there are some more memorable projects. For instance, the Landmaster I, constructed for *Damnation Alley*, is his biggest and most complex project to date. "It was a completely functional machine that could travel across land and water," says Jeffries while describing the design of the Landmaster. "The first thing they gave me was the script. From there I worked with the art department and the producer to come up with a design that fit the filming requirements, could perform all the functions the script called for and be different from anything ever shown on the screen before."

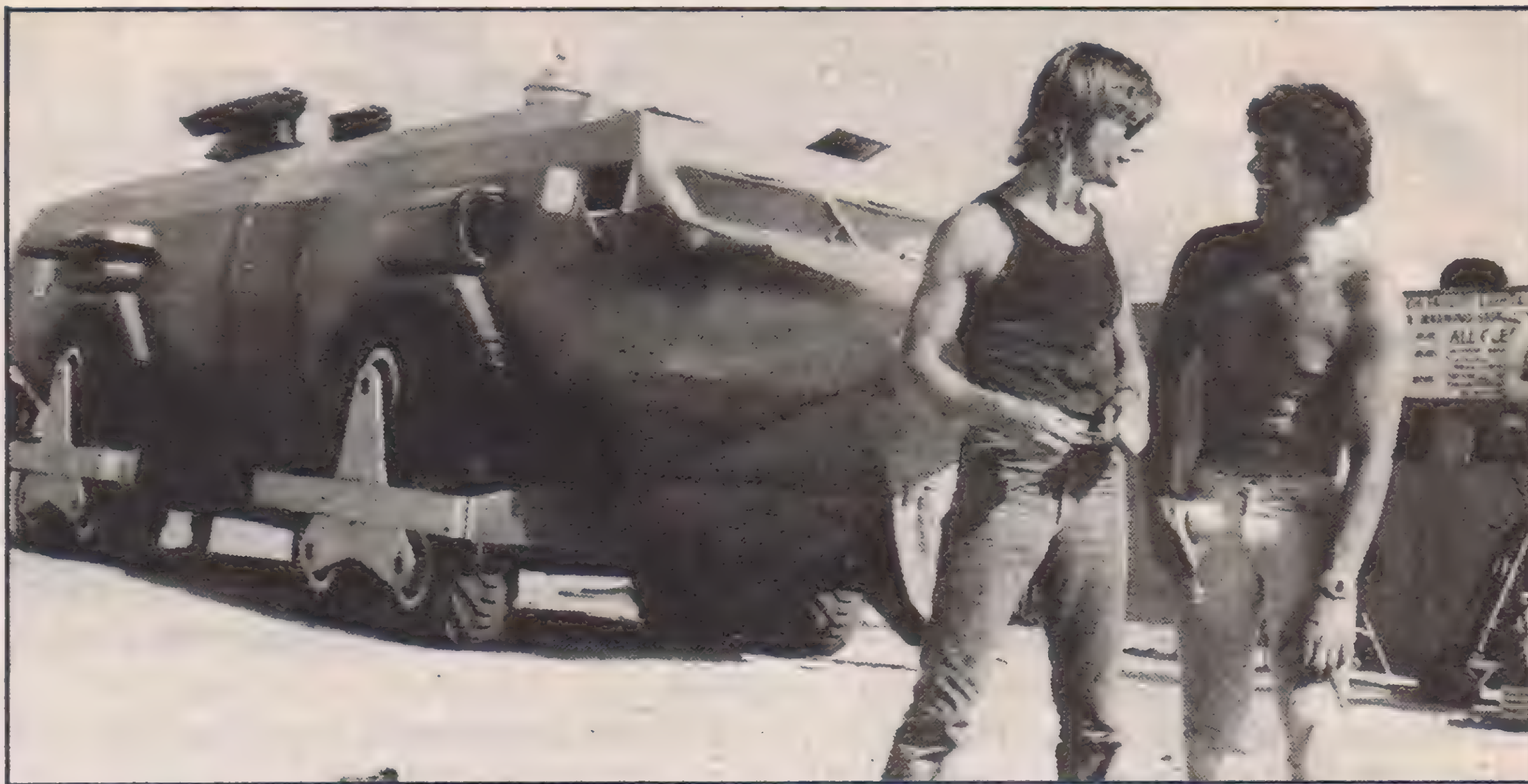
His Landmaster research turned up a wheel design based on those of the Tristar, a commercial jet patented by Lockheed Corp. "We took and made it into a giant that is five times the size of anything they [Lockheed] had built. It can go across sand, rough terrain, up mountains and on regular highways. It goes in water and even paddles itself. There were functional machine guns mounted for some shots, but mockups were used for all the other scenes."

Again, there were some design elements, including the actual interior of the Landmaster, that were never shown on the screen. "They built it as a set on a sound stage," says Jeffries. "The sides come off, the front end and top come off so that you can shoot the interior from any angle."

The seven-gear, 23,000 pound Landmaster had quite a difficult "part" in the film, as Jeffries remembers. "They told me in the script that it was supposed to crash through cement walls. It's 3/8"-thick solid steel in the front so it will go right through walls. I built it a lot stronger than we actually needed to. I was supposed to drive it off a cliff at the end and wreck it, so the whole thing was built like a giant rollcage to protect the driver."

As it turned out, though, the producers of *Damnation Alley* didn't care much for the idea of driving it off a cliff. "They were thinking that they might go into a sequel and they just decided they didn't want to wreck a \$350,000 piece of machinery."

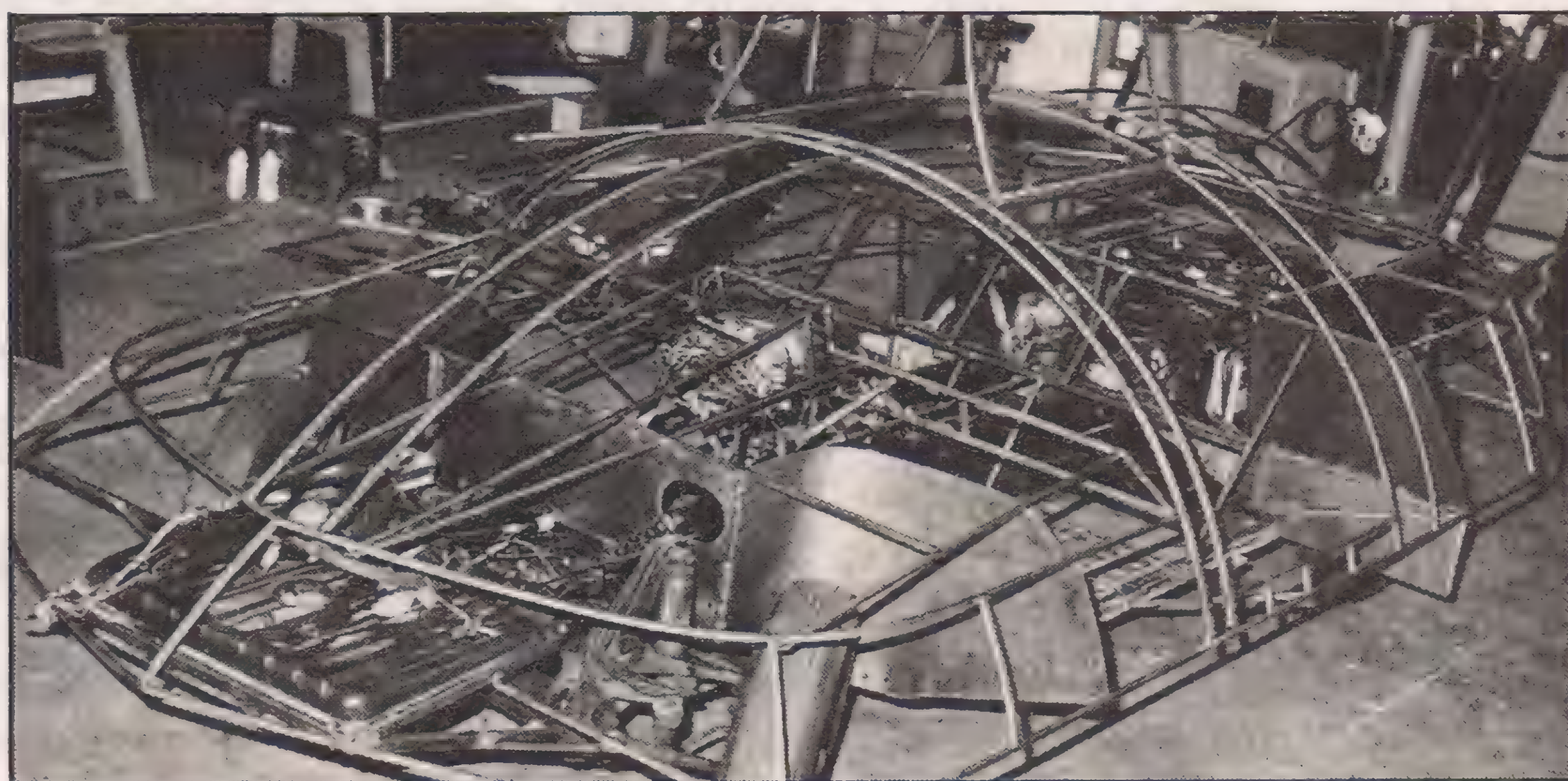
Jeffries' most recent efforts were seen in the *Logan's Run* TV series. He designed the Solar Craft and several smaller vehicles that were simply referred to as the Ground Chaser cars. "Those were the ones Francis and his Sandmen used. We built two of them and



Jan-Michael Vincent, with Jeffries, on *Damnation Alley* set.



Logan's Run chase car.



Superstructure of Ground Chaser, built for TV's *Logan's Run*.



The Bond Moon buggy.

SF VEHICLES

were supposed to build five more, but the series was canceled. Presently, there are two *Logan's Run* vehicles still around: one at the MGM studio and one in Jeffries lot.

Jeffries recalls some of the problems he had in putting together the Solar Craft. It seems that he couldn't get the vehicles to handle properly over the dry desert terrain. The result was that a lot of dust was kicked up—a cameraman's nightmare. "You couldn't get a camera within a quarter mile of it. The kicked-up dust resembled a helicopter landing.

"We combined a hydraulic lift with big balloon tires that allow it to run across the desert like a dune buggy. The hydraulic lifts gave the impression of it coming down off a cushion. Then we turned on blowers to stir up just enough dirt to give the impression of a ground effect, but not enough to affect the cameras. We put the cameras down low to shoot so you wouldn't see the wheels."

Though Jeffries' specialty is in building cars for films, he has also been called on to create other SF props. "I made a device for *Meteor*. There was a housing area in New Jersey scheduled for demolition. They filmed it, as it was blown up, to simulate destruction by the meteor. For some shots, they wanted to show the building collapsing from the inside and they needed some way to protect the camera and film. The idea was to build a fiberglass shell that would keep the camera from being crushed. The finished ball was four feet in diameter with a 13"x19" window for the camera. The customized camera was suspended in an inner web of aluminum bracing and structural support. The fiberglass was two and a half inches thick. Later, they used a crane to haul all the girders and rubble off of it. It was in such good shape we could have dropped another building on it!"

Just as his far-out vehicles add to the magic of SF movies, a drive by Jeffries' shop is like a trip to some fantastic planet. The attraction is one that passersby have taken close notice of,—sometimes too close for Jeffries' liking. "We even had them stop by in bus-loads from some of the Universal Studios' tours. They get out and start wandering all over, and even come in the office and shop. I didn't mind it too much except that they walked off with half of my pictures that hang on the wall."

At the same time that he's trying to keep the curious away from the building, the building itself is also giving him headaches—he's running out of room to store all the "used" SF vehicles and the materials used to create them. "I own an acre of this land, but I'm going to have to dig the whole cliff out from behind the shop so I'll have the room I need. I want to build a lot more of the futuristic designs I've drawn up. I get calls from all over the U.S., and the world, for this

sort of thing. I want a selection of things I can rent out to producers, parades, events and so on. Nobody else in the world builds things like this on speculation."

As he and his futuristic vehicles continue to draw the attention of moviemakers, Jeffries is more and more convinced that he's in the right business—especially since he's located right in the midst of all the Hollywood movie studios.

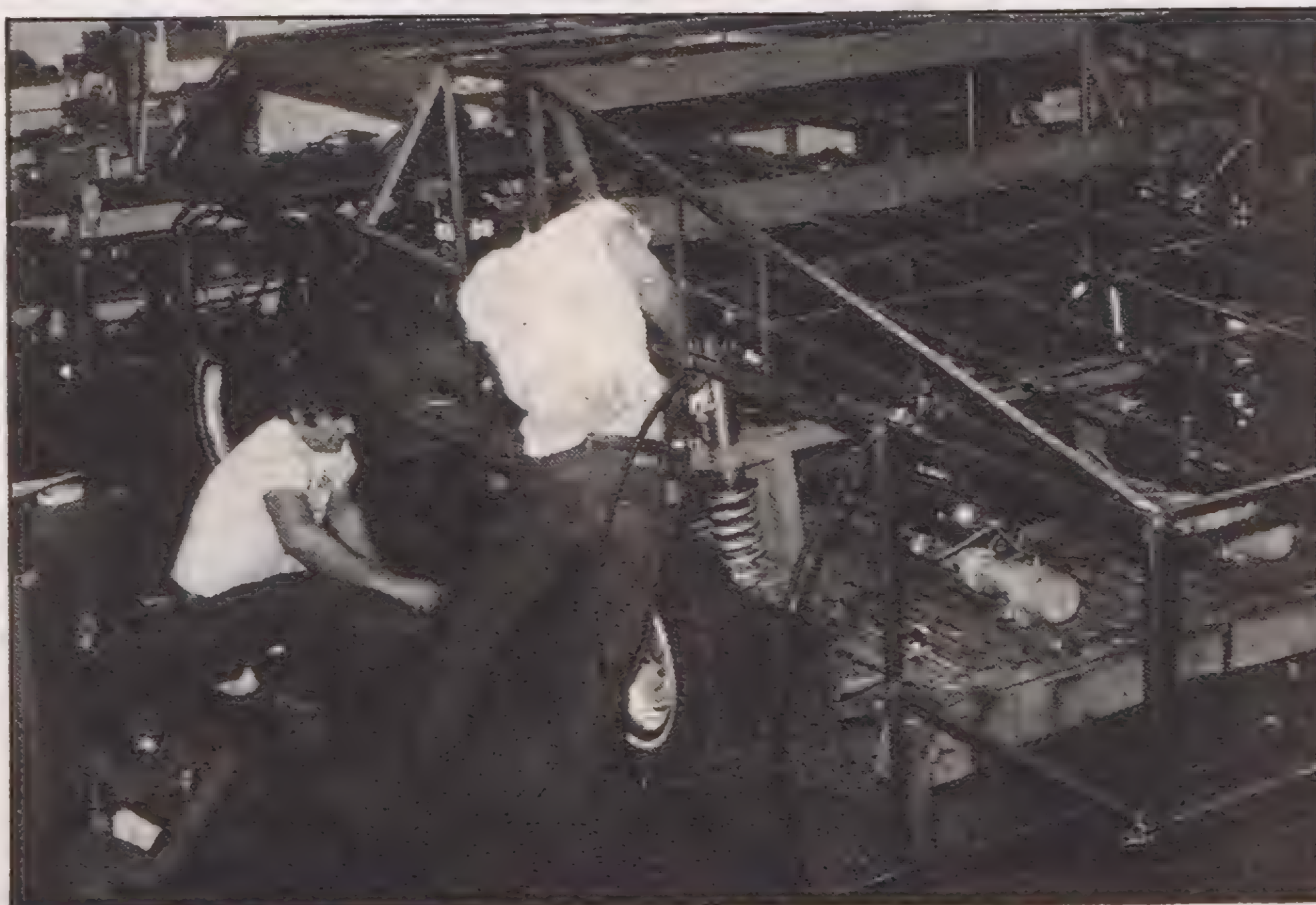
"I'm not interested in pounding dents out

of cars anymore. I'm also not interested in customizing cars. The futuristic stuff is really interesting."

For these and other reasons, Jeffries is redecorating the front of his shop. The new facade will boast a giant fiberglass spaceship on the roof, among other SF goodies. "I'm going to turn the whole face of this shop futuristic." And if it turns into another Hollywood tourist attraction? "I'll put a big fence in front of it." ★



Top: Jeffries, as stunt driver, demolishes store in *Charlie Varrick*. Above: *Logan's* solar car.



Jeffries and assistant work on chassis of *Logan* solar craft.

BY DAVID GERROLD



Making Your Own Movie—or —The Impossible Dream

I have an idea! Let's make a movie!
Let's see now, Kathy can sew the costumes, Steve can write the script, Bob and Tom can build the scenery, Joan can run the camera, we can use my Grandma's barn—and we'll borrow several million dollars from my Dad to pay for it, okay?

* * *

Ah, if only it were that easy.

Let's do some supposing: Suppose the script already exists, a final draft shooting script adapted from a major novel. The novel has gotten good reviews; the script is faithful to the book.

Let's assume we have an author who is capable at both science fiction and film, with substantial credentials in each field; there are few. Let's further assume that this author has labored for several years to write a script that he feels is one of his very best. In other words, let's assume that we have a script we can have faith in.

Now, let's further assume that this writer, because of his experience in film, happens to know some of the special-effects experts whose own experience and skills are particularly well-suited for this script. And suppose also that they are particularly eager to work on this project because they believe that this film would be a big hit and a very good showcase for their own abilities.

And suppose there was another fellow who had the production skill, and still another fellow who has the resources to handle many of the lighting, scenery and camera duties. And suppose all of these people got together—and more—and said, "Let's make a movie." Each one of them has a piece of the dream, and for each of them it would be a labor of love.

In other words, we're talking about a near-ideal production situation.

You can see that kind of spirit in almost any team of amateur filmmakers. After all, any group of people foolhardy enough to willingly take on the myriad problems involved in creating even a few moments of the complex kinetic illusion we call "movies" has to be monomaniacal in their obsession. They must share a vision hard enough and determinedly enough to fight the inertia of the real

world to make that vision true. Wow!

The problem in expanding those Super-8 mm dreams into Super-70 mm ones is one which grows in geometric proportion to the size of the dream. It's a lot easier to raise \$100,000 for a dream than it is to raise \$7,000,000.

That's assuming also that this is a \$7,000,000 picture.

Now, it is not impossible to raise that kind of money for a movie; all you need to do is convince some people who have \$7,000,000 that it's a good idea to give you that \$7,000,000 for a couple of years, because you'll give them \$14,000,000 back, or more even, if you're very lucky.

So, you show them the script—you believe in its possibilities, you want to see this movie, and if nobody else is going to make it, then *you* have to.

They read the script, and they ask you, "Are there 3,500,000 people out there in the real world who also want to see this movie badly enough to pay \$4 to see it? Because that's how many tickets we have to sell at that price to make certain that at least we're not going to lose our original \$7,000,000."

And you have to be able to answer, "Yes, there are." And prove it. Preferably with market reports—but if not, the proven performance of whatever movie you're imitating is sometimes a good argument.

If you're not imitating anybody else, but trying to do something that's original... it's a mite harder. I mean, they're liable to look at you and say, "This movie can't make any money. It's never been done before."

But maybe that's why it should be tried.

The *Trek* movie is a good example of the power of the audience, because it was truly the loyalty of first hundreds, then thousands, and finally millions of *Star Trek* fans (and many members of the cast and crew who were willing to make themselves accessible to the fans, to keep the dream alive) that ultimately convinced the decision-makers at Paramount Pictures that they could sell enough tickets to justify the investment in *Star Trek—The Motion Picture*.

But... before that time, there was a lot of discussion among *Star Trek* fans, circa 1974-75, that the fans should raise \$3,500,000 and give the money to Gene Roddenberry and tell him to make them a *Star Trek* movie. In fact, I heard several terrific ideas from *Star Trek* fans about how raise \$3,500,000. Some of them were almost workable.

The problem—beyond the immediate one of trying to organize 3,500,000 fans, each of whom had one dollar to contribute—was that to raise that kind of money, first you have to have the rights, otherwise you can't legally ask people to contribute. And Paramount certainly wasn't going to give you the rights to *Star Trek* if you didn't first have the money with which to buy them. Sigh.

One good suggestion, of course, was that perhaps you didn't have to make a *Star Trek* movie. Couldn't you make a movie about a different spaceship and a different crew but with a story that was just as good as you could make it? If you had the rights to a specific story, then you could legally look for investors, couldn't you?

Sure, you could.

Which brings us back to our mythical team of would-be filmmakers.

Except, they're not so mythical.

I know of three different would-be production teams looking for money right now. Some of them include people whom you have been reading about in the pages of this magazine for the past three years: makeup artists, miniature builders, special-effects wizards, writers, artists, all dreamers... all looking for someone with money who also shares the dream.

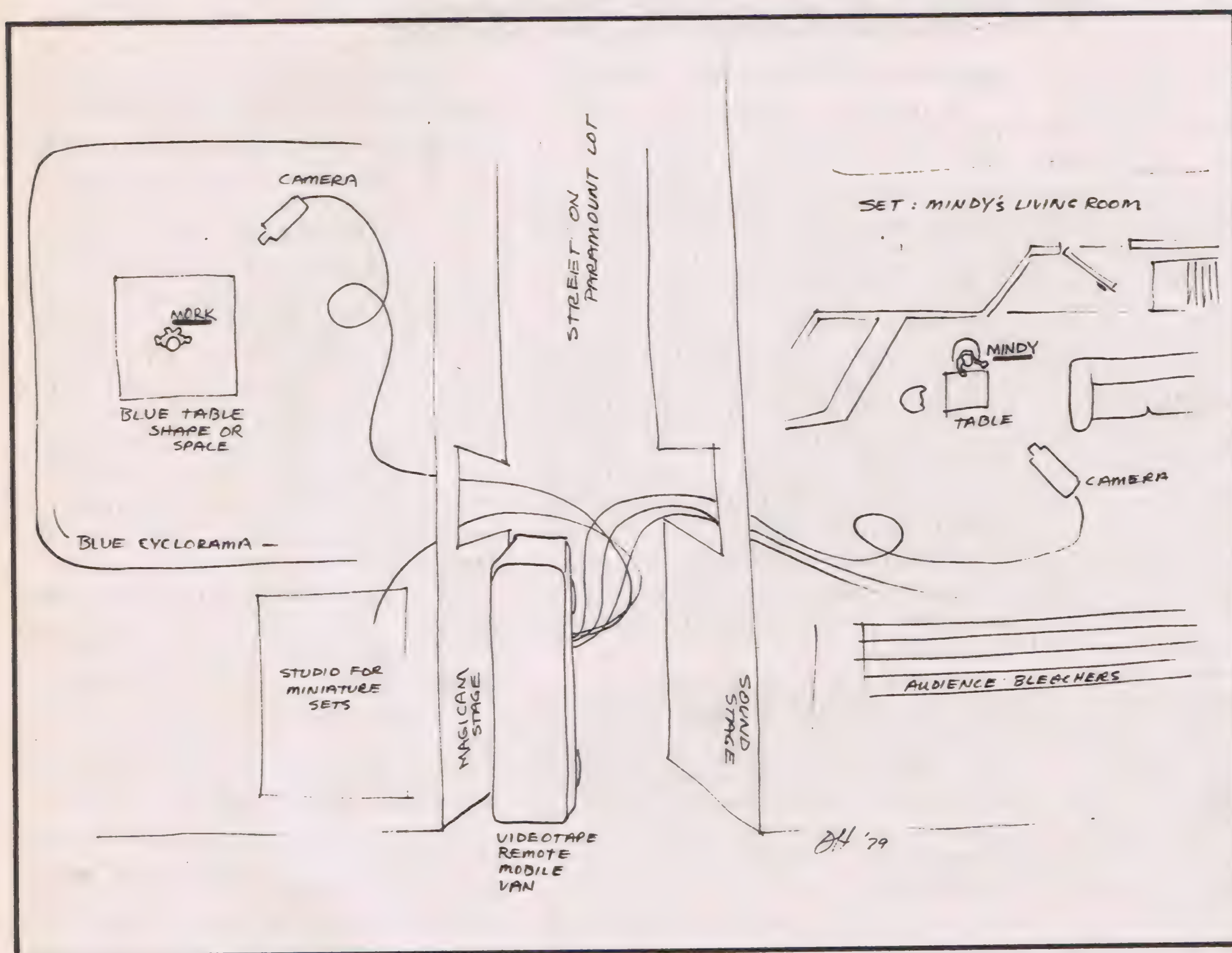
It doesn't matter how much love there is in a project if there isn't any money. Of course,

(continued on page 61)



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The Incredible Shrinking Mork



This sketch indicates the number of separate studios necessary to composite a "miniature" Mork into a miniature set with a full-size live-action set. At far left is Mork on the blue stage, and at right is Mindy on the full-size set.

ART: DAVID HOUSTON

BY DAVID HOUSTON

In this season's premiere episode of *Mork and Mindy*, Paramount pulled out all the stops and crammed "Mork in Wonderland" with more special effects work than in all the past shows put together. Essentially a parody of the classic film *The Incredible Shrinking Man* (in its first half hour), the hour-long episode chronicled Mork's gradual diminution to sub-atomic size and his fall into a parallel world. (Mindy gave Mork a decongestant to shrink his membranes to stop his sneezing. But Orkans are *all* membrane!)

The special-effects wizards were our old friends at Magicam (See STARLOG #9 and #27)—the people who perform similar miniaturization for those TV commercials in which spokesmen amble through rows of computer tubes, stand on gargantuan dollar bills and so on.

Consider the coronary a budget-conscious producer might have had when first reading page one of Act Two of Dale McRaven and Bruce Johnson's script:

Fade In:

Int. Mindy's Living Room—Next Day. Angle on Mork. The camera is at an elevated angle, shooting slightly downward on Mork. He appears to be standing on a yellow carpet. He's wearing a suit and is surrounded by living room furniture (but not Mindy's) which makes him appear to be normal size. Mork is holding a mirror and admiring his new clothes in it.

MINDY (off camera)
How does the new suit fit?

MORK
Fine, considering.

The camera lowers and tilts up to reveal that Mork is standing on the dining-room table, which is covered by a yellow tablecloth. Mindy is seated at the table eating spaghetti, and she looms over Mork, as he is only 12 inches tall. The furniture he is surrounded by is doll's furniture.

Or how about this bit of action which appears a few pages later in the script of this ordinarily

ordinary sit-com:

Mork gets an idea and walks over to the plate of spaghetti, which is mostly eaten, but there are a few strands left. Mork puts his foot on the edge of the plate.

MORK

Time to take the bull by the pasta.

The camera is under the dining-room table, angled towards Mindy's bedroom door. The edge of the tablecloth is at the top of the frame. After a beat, we see a single strand of tied-together spaghetti lowered below the edge of the table cloth until it reaches the floor. After a beat, we see Mork shimmying down the strand of spaghetti.

In principle, these and numerous miniaturization effects were achieved in the same manner:

Robin Williams (Mork) was alone on a stage entirely painted blue. He stood, sat, lay or ran on blue surfaces that matched the contours—greatly magnified—of the furniture and space of the set of Mindy's living room.



PHOTOS: © 1979 ABC/Courtesy Magicam

Mork was in one sound stage, Mindy in another. When Pam Dawber (Mindy) sat eating spaghetti and apparently talking to a 12-inch Mork, she was in the set talking to an empty table while hearing Williams' dialogue over a low-level P.A. system on the stage; Williams listened to Dawber the same way.

The two pictures and sound tracks were combined in a mobile videotape unit between the two sound stages. An engineer "tuned out" the blue behind Williams and matted his small image onto the picture of Dawber sitting at the table.

Mork and Mindy is generally a filmed—not videotaped—show; but the method of miniaturization required the use of electronic special effects. Also, the show is usually filmed live before a studio audience. Not so for "Mork in Wonderland."

The shrinking effects took place all in the first half-hour of the show (except for the brief moment of Mork's return to normal size at the end). So the first half of the show was shot on videotape; the second was on film. Later, the videotaped portions were converted to film: the finished product is conventional 35 millimeter.

The principles involved are rather straightforward; applying them was anything but simple. Consider, for example, the shot of Mork running across the floor of Mindy's living room, being chased by a dog, toward the imagined safety of a mousehole. For that shot, the furniture needed for the scene was transported to the miniature stage in the Magicam facility; a piece of wall with a cut-

Above: Mork on the blue stage with mousehole set-up in background. Right: Monitor test with Mork and his shadow matted onto Mindy's hand.



out mousehole formed the background of the little set. The dog and mouse were on the miniature set; Mork was running—reduced to a relative six inches by lenses and camera distances—on the big blue stage nearby. Think of the measurements and preplanning necessary to match up those two shots!

There was only one oversized prop: the strand of spaghetti, which was really a fat rope Williams climbed down. He and the hanging rope were shot together; the table, chairs, walls, etc. were in the full-sized set of Mindy's living room.

Magicam utilizes its unique computer-controlled system to combine actors with miniature sets (as with the mouse shots). The live-action camera on the blue stage is linked via sensors and motors to a scaled-down

camera set-up photographing the miniature set in the adjacent studio. If the live-action camera pans, zooms, dollies or tilts, the "miniature camera" duplicates the movements in scale, simultaneously.

"Mork in Wonderland" was not merely a hilarious episode; its visual imagery made it engrossing. Does this mean that Paramount plans to keep their show more ambitious and imaginative? Not really. After the shooting was completed, several associated with the production were heard to exclaim, "Never—never again!" Then these same people saw the completed videotape and smiled a lot. "That is terrific!" someone said.

Who knows...maybe next season's opener will show an amazing colossal Mork terrorizing a tiny Denver. ★



PHOTOS: © 1979 A.I.P.

Above: Ronald Neame on the set of his arctic encampment. Right: Sean Connery escapes from the damaged Hercules Center through the New York subway tunnels.

"Meteor"

(continued from page 21)

his script—which does the editing for you.”

How long after that 90-day shooting period was the rough cut completed?

“Five days, because I edited everything as we went along. Don’t call it a ‘rough cut,’ though. There’s never really a *rough* cut. Much of that stays as it is. After that first cut, you usually spend two or three months preparing the ‘director’s cut,’ corrected to his instructions. But here it is, a year and two months later . . . and we’re not finished yet.”

What’s the hold-up, the special effects?

“The special effects. After principal photography, we announced a release date of, oh, around Christmas of ’78. Then it was May of ’79. Now it’s October.

Kress also feels that *Meteor* will be all together by October. He will just edit the effects shots as they dribble in.

The most pleasing aspect of editing *Meteor*, for Kress, has been in the sound department. It’s not terribly common for film editors also to edit sound; but Kress has done it before, for *Audrey Rose*.

“I’ve particularly enjoyed the predubbing process—where you take the dialogue tracks and four reels of sound effects and boil them down from 40 tracks to about six.” He will be involved in music dubbing as well; and this might necessitate some recutting of the film to adjust to music lengths.

The route a would-be film editor must travel is a discouraging one. Kress says his ex-

perience is average. In 1959, he began as an apprentice film editor at MGM; four years later he moved to Columbia Pictures where he apprenticed for another four years. “It was eight years before I was allowed to cut. Eight years!” Once the union declared him eligible, he could not find a job: “There are too many people in this business.” Eventually, of course, he did get work and began building his reputation. The Oscar he won for co-editing *The Towering Inferno* with his father, Harold Kress, hasn’t hurt.

How does one get into the editor’s union in the first place?

“You have to know somebody. It’s as simple—or hard—as that. The trouble is, everybody wants to begin in the film business as an editor. And it is a great place to start. You learn about everything.”

Kress turns his attention to a movieola—the venerable editing tool of Hollywood since the silents—where a shot shows a tall dish radio antenna out on a desert somewhere. “Now, where’s that truck shot . . . ?” he wonders aloud, returning to work.

Making the Music Work

Back in the recording studio, a larger group has gathered.

“You’re back in time to hear the march!” Neame announces. “In this scene, at the end of the picture, I always wanted to try something—to mix American and Russian themes almost contrapuntally. I always *thought* it was a good idea, and Larry [Rosenthal] agreed with me. But we didn’t really *know* until now. It does work; and it’s tremendously exciting!” He adds, settling

down to watch through the plate-glass portal and listen via the wall of loudspeakers behind him, “Of course the idea isn’t particularly original. There’s the *1812 Overture* with its blending of French and Russian anthems. But just listen to this . . .”

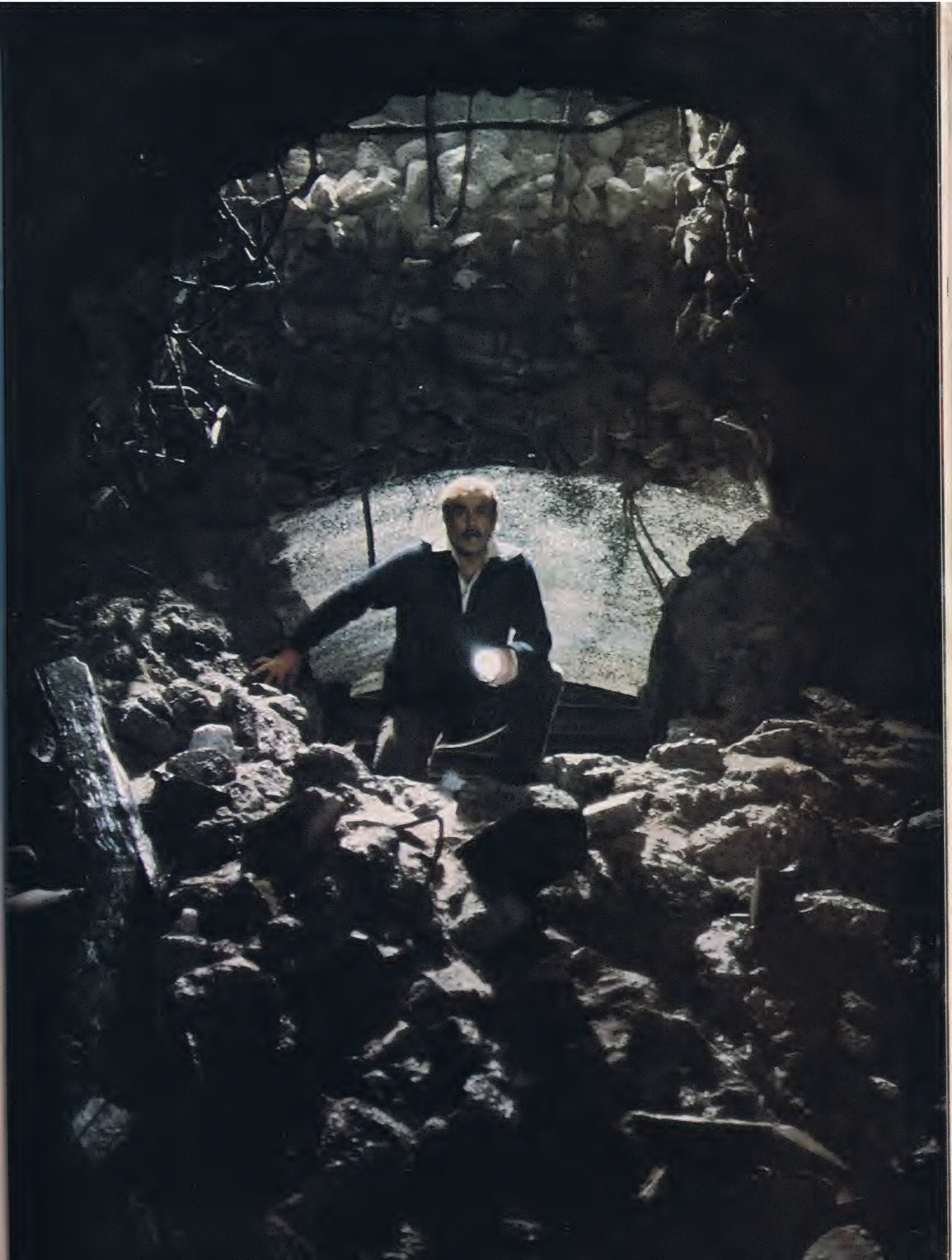
The warning lights glow red again. “Production 5037; 2526, take six.” The screen snaps to brightness with a shot of sticks poised over a military drum. A close-up on trumpets. As a wide shot begins, Rosenthal conducts the final music of the film. The survivors of the disaster are at an airport, and among cheering mobs and marching bands, they part; some of them board a Russian plane. The American theme is a proud, Sousa-like march with a top melody that would suit a Western movie about wide-open spaces; the Russian theme is heavy, melancholy, heroic. It is indisputably thrilling.

After the take, producer Sandy Howard congratulates composer Rosenthal, hugs him. “The music is bringing the whole picture up, just as we hoped it would!”

There is an inspiring, infectuous feeling in that recording studio. These people have been at work on *Meteor* for two years or more. Living with it, investing the best of their abilities in it, still too close to dare to judge it. But here and now, it is beginning to seem that the pain and effort have been worth it. The music—the glue—is turning all those long pieces of plastic into a real movie.

“It’s going to work!” Neame says, as if surprised by the idea.

The invisible technician out on the orchestra floor intones, “Production 5037; end titles, take one . . .” ★





Unidentified Talking Objects

By TOM McDONOUGH

Instead of a pizza, I got an alien. Now, you have to admit, a lot of strange things happen in Pasadena, what with both Caltech and the Jet Propulsion Lab being here. But a visit from an alien is not normal even in Pasadena.

It occurred one evening, just as I was about to go out for a pizza. My doorbell rang, and when I opened the door, there stood it.

It was bald and looked like a plump used-car salesman, a not uncommon sight in this city, the Mecca of used cars. It wore a loud (even for Southern California) plaid sport coat, and asked, "You Felton Ashley?"

"Yes," I replied, unaware of the extraordinary nature of the visitor.

"Fred Phillips said I should speak to you about Toastmasters. May I come in?"

"Sure," I said, motioning him in. Fred's the president of the JPL/Caltech Toastmasters, my toughest competitor.

He looked around my living room, surveying my collection of *Man from Uncle* first-edition paperbacks on the floor, the TV set on top of the anvil and the dirty dishes in the kitchenette sink (where I hadn't had a chance to clean them all month because the dishwasher was full of dirty laundry).

"No wonder the guidebook calls this the Planet of Slobs," he muttered. "But let me get to the point. I am a representative of Toastmasters Interstellar."

"What?" I said. (One of the things I've learned from my Toastmasters Club is how to never be at a loss for words.)

"Yes. Where your Toastmasters International teaches public speaking to humans, my organization teaches these skills to creatures throughout the galaxy, regardless of race, planet of origin or chemical structure."

I began to detect the pulse-pumping thrill of a great speaker at work. I noticed the excellent use of gestures, apart from a curious twitch which I later learned was due to a bad-fitting pseudoskin. I observed his steady gaze, and noted the lack of "uhs." Frankly, in my admiration of the speech's style, I didn't pay much attention to its content.

"Your organization," he continued, "is just a local branch of the great Toastmasters Intersellar. Surprised?" I shrugged, and he



became less confident. "Many of your Earth organizations are just chapters of galactic groups. You'd be amazed at some of the things that are run by interstellar confederations; the National Football League, ABC-TV, the AFL-CIO and the Internal Revenue Service—"

"That's all very interesting," I said uneasily, as his words began to penetrate my skull. I began to think of how to get this nut out of my place before he turned violent.

"So anyway," he said "I'm here to invite you to visit our local chapter."

"Gee, that would be awfully nice, but I'm afraid I just can't get away right now. Work, you know."

"That's just what Fred said...when he gave me your name. Said you were always looking for outside meetings to attend."

"Yeah, good old Fred," I said, groaning inwardly. "He's been especially nice to me ever since I beat him at the last speech contest."

He's a She

"Tell me, honestly, as one Toastmaster to another, why is it that you don't want to visit my club?"

"OK, Mr., what is your name anyway?"

"Ms. Vnil," said the alien.

"Ms.?" I asked. "You mean you're female?"

"Sure am, you male chauvinist humanoid! I'm required to wear a disguise when I'm on Earth. Can't frighten the locals, it's against the rules."

"Look, Ms. Vnil, if I could really believe that you were from another planet, I'd be delighted to visit your place. After all, I'm chairman of the Club Interchange Program."

"So if I prove I'm extraterrestrial, you'll come up for a visit?"

"Of course," I said, smiling.

She reached into her sportcoat and pulled

out a white object, about the size of a playing card. She mumbled something into it and handed it to me. A picture appeared on it...a moving, color picture...in three dimensions. A group of three, pink, octopus-like creatures were floating around a sphere that had little statuettes on it. My eyes bugged out as much as theirs.

"That's a kind of chess tournament that's popular in the Galactic Center," she said.

I nodded dumbly.

"Convinced?" she asked.

I tried to imagine how this gizmo could have been made. There was no way on Earth. I nodded.

"Then let's go. We just have time to catch the meeting."

Extraterrestrial Cab Co.

We left my apartment and walked outside. There, a cab was waiting, and we got in.

"He's one of us," she said to me, pointing to the driver. He looked like your average cab driver to me, shaggy sideburns and all. "I wonder," I said, "how many times I've been driven by an extraterrestrial cabbie?"

"Probably lotsa times, Mac," he said. "We run mosta the cab companies on this here planet. T'rific way ta find out what's goin' on. Why, we even gotta school just ta teach extrat'restrial cabbies how ta speak like the gen-u-wine article. I got the highest score in my class in cussin' in American, y'know?"

"T'rific," I said.

We drove over to the far side of Mount Wilson. We stopped at a campsite in the woods, and she and I got out. The cabbie drove off.

It was dark, and I could hardly see the trail. We went a few feet and I heard a hissing sound. A glowing hatch opened up, and we stepped into a cylindrical spaceship that had been hidden by the night. We sat down on some couches that adjusted to our contours as if designed for any possible shape of being.

A pulsing sound started and, from the viewscreen, I could see that we were rising, even though I felt no sense of motion.

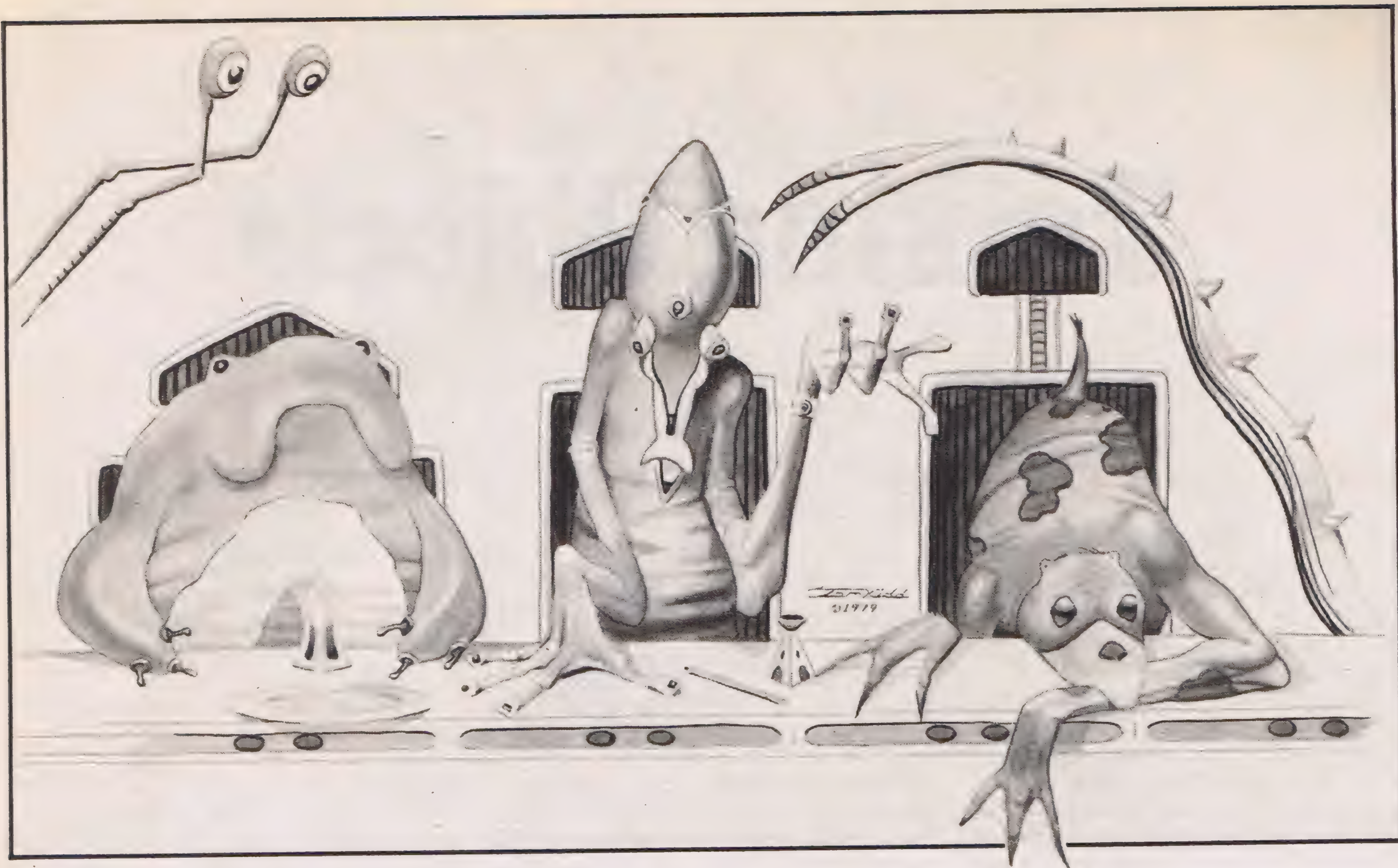
"Where's your club located?" I asked.

"Planet Neptune," she said.

"Neptune?" I said weakly. "Isn't that kind of far?"

"Yeah," she said, "but we've had to keep moving our station farther and farther away to escape detection by your lousy spacecraft."

Left: Ms. Vnil sheds human exterior aboard ship. Above: The Nirvish counter at work.



"But," I said, fighting down panic, "if you're interstellar travelers, these planetary distances ought to be nothing to you."

"Ought to be, sure, but the Galactic Cops enforce the local speed limit around here—the speed of light—because if we went faster, you primitives would detect our spaceships when they crossed the light barrier. Believe me, having to go all the way to Neptune at sublight speed for a little fun is a real pain in the grizlfort. If they didn't allow us to slow down time on these jaunts, I'd quit."

"But if you're going to all that trouble to keep us from detecting you, how come you're telling me all this?"

"Oh, we're allowed to make a few local contacts for study. We know that no one would believe you if you talked, as long as there's no hard evidence of us."

She said, "Pardon me while I slip into something more comfortable," then proceeded to disrobe and de-skin. I saw that she was orange-skinned, with a face like flattened terrier and a hairy body that reminded me of something I once saw in a cage at a zoo—only less sexy.

One Hour to Neptune

We chatted for the hour it took to reach Neptune. The base was actually on the planet's bigger satellite, Triton. We landed in a large, metallic dome that sealed behind us, and walked into a hemispherical room walled with blue bubbles that kept shifting in slowly changing patterns. Seated at a long, oval table was the strangest assortment of "people" I have ever seen, even in Pasadena. It was a cross between the Cantina Scene in *Star Wars* and the Mad Hatter's tea party in *Alice in Wonderland*.

We sat at one end of the table, and Ms. Vnil

put a rubbery blob into my ear. "This will translate everyone into English," she said.

"The meeting will now come to order," said a purple, carrot-like being at the other end of the table.

"That's our club president," Ms. Vnil whispered to me.

"I now call upon Shulgart va Wormsen to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance."

A pink humanoid with the head of a lizard stood up, and so did the rest of us, or at least those who could do so. He spoke: "I pledge allegiance to the Equation of the United States of the Galaxy, and to the hyperspace for which it stands; one Universe, under the Supreme Computer; with space-time and energy for all."

Everyone sat down.

"Mr. Lnrl," said the president, "would you please say grace?"

A large egg-shaped being stood up with slow dignity, looked at the ceiling, and said, "Thanks. Eat."

"Thank you, Mr. Lnrl," said the president, "for that moving prayer." At that, cylinders of strange foods rose up at each place at the table. Mine contained a white cardboard box marked "Kentucky Fried Chicken."

"We always keep some on hand for visiting Earthlings," said Ms. Vnil.

"Ms. Vnil," said the president. "Would you care to introduce your guest?"

She stood up and said, "Tonight I have brought Mr. Felton Ashley from Earth. He is a member of Club 3292X, and is a mechanic. His hobbies are eating and watching television."

She sat down, and they applauded and waved tentacles.

"Does the Educational Vice President

have any announcements?" asked the president.

"Yes, Mr. President," said a thin creature with a head about two centimeters thick and one meter in diameter. "Member Rulawoto-wonilo will not be able to be Nivrish Counter tonight, because she/he had to leave unexpectedly to reproduce. Instead, Freem 7 will be Nivrish Counter."

Beware the Nivrish

"What's a Nivrish Counter?" I asked Ms. Vnil.

"He counts nivrish," she said.

"Oh," I said.

"Whatever you do," she added, "don't nivrish."

"OK," I replied.

"Are there any reports or announcements?" asked the president.

"Yes," said Shulgart va Wormsen of the pink lizard-head. "Next month, our club will have a joint meet with club 37-DbTwirn at Alpha Centauri B."

A motley chorus of groans and squeeks greeted this news. "That club is such a bunch of sore losers," Ms. Vnil explained to me. "Last time we had a meeting with them, one of the losers vaporized three of our members and drank half our fuel supply. Barbarians! Do you have any idea how much starship fuel costs these days? Or how long you have to wait in line for it?"

"Now," said the president, "I would like the Educational Vice President to present us with an educational lecture."

The thin creature with the pancake head stood up, cleared his vocal orifice, and said, "One of the most important rules for oxygen-breathing speakers is never to give long speeches in non-oxygen atmospheres. I once

saw a fellow try to give a speech in a methane atmosphere. He wanted to impress the natives, so he only dipped into an oxygen bottle at the end of every couple of sentences. Before the speech was half over, he was out cold. It permanently affected his brain. Since then, he has never been able to memorize speeches longer than three words, and he can only walk sideways." He bowed and sat down.

"Thank you for that fine speech," said the president. "And now, I'd like to turn the meeting over to the Toastmaster of the Evening—"

"I move we expel Freem 7 from the club!" shouted a heretofore silent wormlike being, sitting at the end of the table.

"Parliamentarian?" asked the president.

A cubic creature with three large teardrop eyes stood up and said, "Mr. President, according to Xlivn's Rules of Order, a motion to expel a member is always in order following an educational lecture, provided that it is done during an even-numbered month. Since this is the 54th month of the Galactic Standard year, the motion is in order."

"Very well," said the president, and the worm-like creature looked smug, if one can presume to read the facial expression of a worm. "Is there a second for the motion to expel Freem 7?"

Silence.

"Very well, the motion dies for lack of a second."

The cubical parliamentarian rose and said, "Mr. President, according to Xlivn's Rules of Order, if a motion to expel a member fails to be seconded, the Sergeant at Arms must penalize the member who made the motion."

A Great Time-Saver

A creature who looked like the Frankenstein monster's ugly brother whipped out a sort of pistol, touched a trigger, and a beam shot out, vaporizing the worm-like creature.

"Let the record show," said the president, "that the member has been penalized by the Sergeant at Arms."

I am quite sure that my face turned pale at this point. "Ms. Vnil," I said, "it seems that your club has a more effective way of penalizing obnoxious members than we have."

"Thank you," she said. "It's a great time-saver. We find that it discourages the more unpopular motions."

"That's always been a problem in my club," I said.

"Not in ours," she said.

I sat there for the next four hours, listening to diverse speeches on galactic trade, cosmic art and a debate on the legalization of cabbage.

At last, the Master Evaluator spoke. "This has been a fine meeting," the three-footed creature said. "I do think, though, that Mr. Lnrl would be better off if he could cut down on the references to his own culture, since most of us are not accustomed to a civilization with 323 sexes.

"And the female being from Betelgeuse who entertained us so thoroughly with her tales of juvenile delinquency among the philosopher-kings of her planet could have

been just as effective if she'd used less body language. Yes, I know, we are always encouraging members to use vigorous gestures to communicate meaning, but if she'd used more subtle movements, our member from the planet Alpheratz IX might still be alive.

"And Shulgart va Wormsen. You could have abbreviated your speech without much loss. Two hours devoted to the intricacies of eating rocks is more than some of us are able to absorb. Still, it's true that he did not speak as excessively as last month's time-stealer, who you may recall spoke for three weeks.

"Overall, then, it was a splendid meeting and I hope that we will be hearing from some of the lifeforms in the audience who have not participated lately."

He sat down, and the president said, "I wonder if our guest from Earth would like to comment on the meeting."

I nodded and stood up. "A fine club," I said, "with several innovations that we Earthlings could do well to copy. Your method for controlling obnoxious members is stunningly effective. And I particularly enjoyed the visual speech of Freem 7. His yellows when he discussed his childhood on a planet with 17 suns were simply gorgeous. Also, I cannot fail to mention the superb vocal style of Mr. Lnrl, whose talk, I must say in all honesty, was the most moving autobiographical speech that I have ever heard from an egg. A most enjoyable meeting." I sat down.

Polite applause.

"Now," said the president, "would the Nivrish Counter please present his report?"

Freem 7 stood up and said, "I am delighted to be able to report that no one nivrishd all evening."

At that moment, the cubical parliamentarian stretched and yawned.

The Sergeant at Arms vaporized him.

"Correction," said Freem 7. "One nivrish."

"Hardly anyone nivrishes during a meeting anymore," said Ms. Vnil, "since we began vaporizing them."

Then they presented the awards of the evening. The time-stealer award went to Shulgart va Wormsen, who was then immediately vaporized.

The award for best speaker of the night went to Freem 7.

"This month," said the president, "the award is two tons of ammonia."

"Ammonia?" I said to Ms. Vnil.

"Yes, ammonia," she said. "Some get drunk on it, some breathe it, some eat it frozen on sticks and others just listen to it."

"On Earth," I said, "we use it for cleaning." One of the aliens overheard me and laughed hysterically.

"And now, for our guest," said the president, "we have a special prize just for coming here and being such a nice creature." He presented me with a piece of paper. It was from one of those Earth-organizations that they control.

It was the Kentucky Fried Chicken franchise—for Mars.

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The New, Original Anthony Rogers -or- Two Bucks in the 25th Century

Buster Crabbe talks candidly about "Buck Rogers," old and new.

By ALAN BRENDER

Sitting in a director's chair in a darkened studio—the only light being focused on a space fighter craft—is a living legend. His name is inscribed on the back of his chair, but that isn't necessary to recognize this man—Buster Crabbe.

To many SF buffs, Crabbe epitomizes the space-age hero. And well he should, for Crabbe established the science-fiction movie superhero with the debut of *Flash Gordon* in 1936. Then he went on to bring *Buck Rogers* to the celluloid medium. These serials have kept kids on the edges of their seats on Saturday mornings—first in movie theaters and later in their living rooms—for more than two generations. Even today, these serials made in the 30s are still being run to the enjoyment of both youngsters and nostalgic adults.

Now, after a hiatus of 40 years, Crabbe is again back working on a *Buck Rogers* feature. Playing Brigadier Gordon in the September 27 show of NBC's *Buck Rogers in the 25th Century*, Crabbe, on this his last day of shooting, is the center of attention. During this STARLOG interview, he is asked to take a few minutes to appear with Gil Gerard (the new Buck) in a segment to be shown on the *Today Show*; actress Erin Gray (Wilma Deering) briefly interrupts the interview with profuse apologies to request an autographed picture from this venerable old man; Gil Gerard stops to seek advice from his "coach." Other members of cast and crew act more like starstruck fans than the professionals they are. Crabbe finally turns down requests for autographs in order to continue with the STARLOG interview.

Asked how it feels to be back on a set doing a *Buck Rogers* production, Crabbe replies, "I never left it; Buck and Flash. I've been doing this for years. I do lectures on them and on

old movies of the 30s, 40s and 50s, at colleges.

"But as far as noticing the difference between then and now, it's mainly that the special effects are much superior. And then these guys have all the advantages of what went before them. We made ours in 1938... 41 years makes a big difference. Film is faster now and more sensitive. They use a lot of shoulder cameras. *They* can get away with practically no light at all on the set. *We* had to have plenty of light to make damn sure the scenes got on film. Camera size then was enormous, too. And you had sound booms. Now they can *wire* you for sound. You can walk anywhere on the set and carry your microphone with you. You don't have to reach out."

At this point Gil Gerard, the present-day Buck Rogers, steps up to say, "Hiya Buster! Did you see how that went?"

"Yeah. I was just telling this guy about how archaic our special effects looked compared to these," replies Crabbe.

"But," adds Gerard, "*our* special effects will look as archaic 40 years from now. People will be laughing the same way. What we think is neat now will look so elementary 40 years from now—I hope."

"They are studying electronics all the time—so it's going to happen, but I won't be around to see it happen," Crabbe says.

"Oh you'll be around until you're 123," Gerard quips as he is called back to the set.

"You know," says Crabbe, returning to the subject of special effects, "when I think about it, those guys did a great job back then. All they had then to work with on *Flash Gordon* was what Alex Raymond had drawn in the comic strip. What the spacecraft looked like... what the Clay Men and the Hawk Men looked like... what Ming looked like;

even what Dale and Flash looked like. Still they came up with some good stuff.

"Now, take the 'light bridge'—you want to know a couple of secrets about the light bridge Ming used to get himself and his retinue from the top of one building to the top of another? Remember how Ming reaches out—*zing!*—there's a light bridge. They walk across it, reach the other side and *zsst*—no light bridge. There were no lasers or anything like that in those days. What the special-effects people did was to take each individual frame of film and scratch the emulsion off. Then on the next frame they scratched a little more of the emulsion off. Then a little more, frame by frame until they got all the frames scratched off. When they couldn't scratch the film anymore, there was no light bridge. They did the same thing with the ray guns—they scratched the emulsion on each frame of film.

Buck vs. the Octopus

"Here's something I haven't thought about for a long time—the fight with the octopus. This was where I had an underwater fight with an octopus. Actually, I was standing on the stage, and they shot it *through* water. The octopus was made of sponge rubber with eight tentacles and all of them had wires on them. He didn't grab me; I grabbed him and put him around me. They shot it through water with bubbles coming up every once in a while. It looked... not bad."

Flash Gordon was Crabbe's first science-fiction character, and he got the part of Buck Rogers as a result of having done Flash. "I never tested or anything. I guess they felt I

Buster Crabbe (left) as Brigadier ("Flash") Gordon leaves retirement to help Buck.



was pretty much established in the space thing."

But for the initial role of Flash in 1936, Crabbe was not very enthusiastic about playing the part. "I really didn't want to do it. It was just too far out. Three crazy people in a rocketship off to Mongo getting in all sorts of trouble. Fortunately, I was wrong. *Flash* was the thing that has kept me alive."

Crabbe went to the interview for the role of Flash Gordon primarily, he says, because he was a fan of the comic strip and wanted to see who they would choose to do the part. When he got on the set, he found about 16 actors milling about. Two of them he recognized; one he thought perfect for the part.

"A good actor, a healthy guy with real wavy hair. All they would have had to do was bleach his hair. George Burton was his name. The other one, I thought—maybe. Fortunately, he didn't get it. Two months later John Ford picked him to play the juvenile lead in a film he was going to do. The film was *Hurricane*—the guy was Jon Hall." But then Crabbe started chatting with a man responsible for many of the serials produced in the 30s and even in the non-talking 20s. He asked Crabbe whether he wanted to the part. Crabbe responded to himself, "I really don't want it." But before he got a chance to utter the words aloud, the man said, "You can have it, if you want it."

"Now I'm stuck," thought Crabbe. "I started to say, 'You know Mr. . . .'" Then the producer broke in and said, "We know you're under contract to Paramount. We'll borrow you."

Crabbe hoped Paramount would say that he wasn't available. But instead, in October of 1936, he was loaned out to do *Flash Gordon*. He finished in February 1937.

This was five years after he had been a competitor in the Olympics and won a gold medal in swimming—the only one won by an American male swimmer that year. He held 16 world and American records.

Athletic Prowess

It was his athletic prowess that led him initially into acting. Paramount at that time had a property which it thought would be an answer to the popular Tarzan films—then very popular and also featuring an ex-swimmer, Johnny Weismuller. So Paramount began a talent hunt. After searching the nation amid much publicity to find an actor to play Casper, a young man reared by lions, the talent agents decided to tap the Olympics contestants who were then in Los Angeles for the international Olympic competitions.

"Twenty of us were taken down to the studio," Crabbe relates. "Being Olympic competitors, they treated us royally. And we were fascinated seeing people from the screen in person. They took us to lunch, and I don't think any of us got anything to eat. As we were about to take a bit of food, in would come Marlene Dietrich or Mae West or Gary Cooper in his cowboy outfit.

"After lunch, they sent us to wardrobe where they gave us little G-strings to wear.



Erin Gray obviously enjoys the company of her two macho co-stars, Buster Crabbe, the original space hero (left), and Gil Gerard (right), the 1979 model.

Then we were put on a stage and given photographic tests. Finally, they thought we should do something—so they gave us javelins to throw. Then they asked us to heave a two-foot by two-foot rock around. It was made of papier mache and weighed all of five pounds. So we had to pretend to struggle."

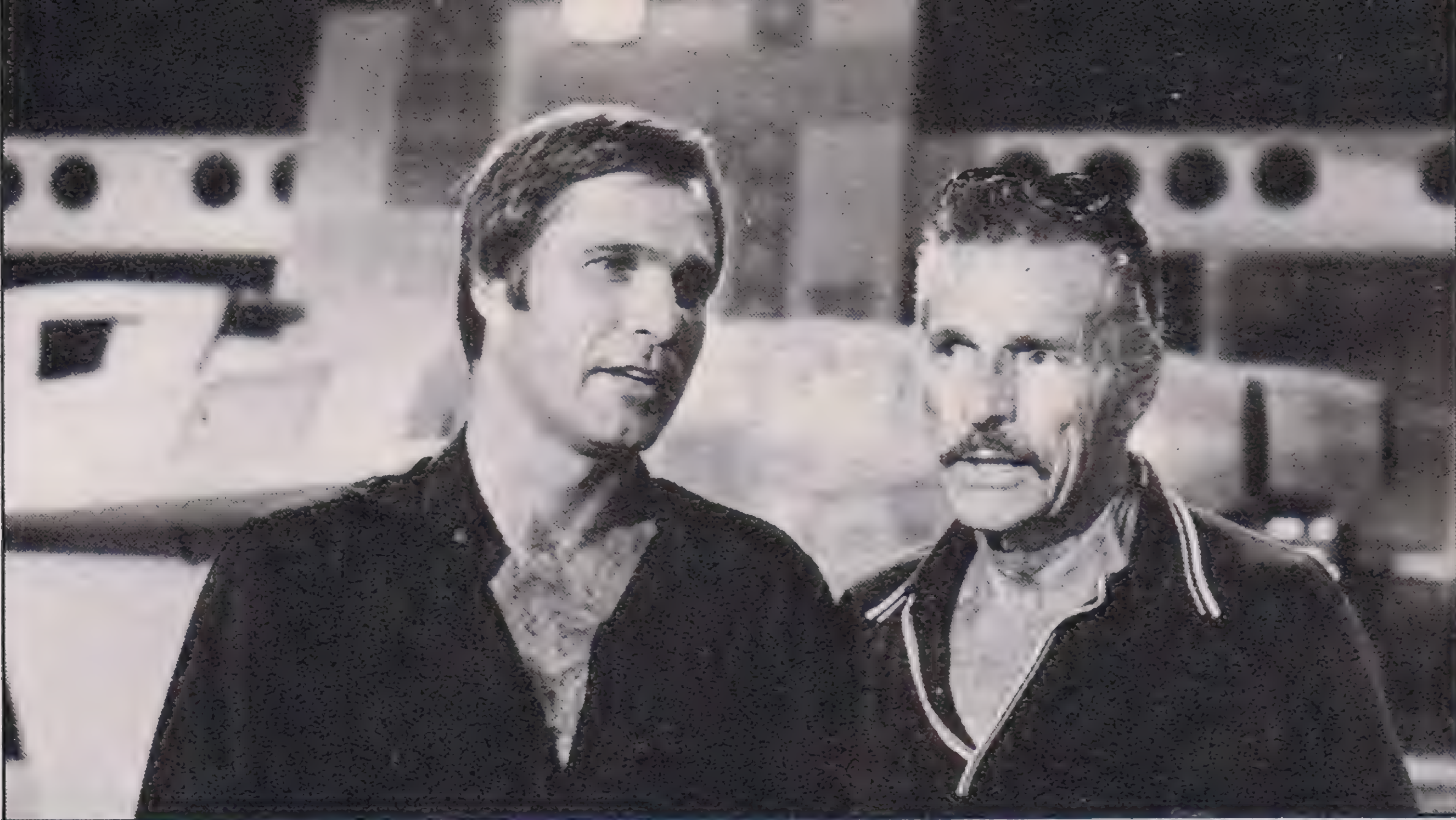
After the audition was over, the Olympic competitors were returned to their quarters. Immediately after the Olympic games ended, Crabbe received a call to come back to the studio for a screen test. But he attributes the call more to his winning a gold medal during the competition than to having done a good screen test the first time.

"If I had won second or third place in that race, they would never have had me back. I

had already completed one year of law school. I would have finished and gone back to the Hawaiian Islands with a good set-up in a big company."

Instead, Crabbe tested again, won the part in *King of the Jungle* and was awarded a seven-year contract with a one-year option. He says he frittered away the first year because he expected to be dropped. He assumed they had signed him up to get publicity on the sports pages.

But when they picked up his option, he decided it was time to get serious about acting. "Hell," he admits, "I had never even considered going out for the school play in high school." So he chose three actors he admired and attempted to emulate them:



PHOTOS: © 1979 NBC

Gerard and Crabbe had a lot of fun working together on this episode. In fact, Crabbe would like to guest star on the series throughout its run.

Fredric March, Melvyn Douglas and Akim Tamiroff. He was hoping to be cast in a good part with a good cast.

"It never happened," he says. "The only 'A' picture I ever made was *King of the Jungle*—the first one. It cost \$750,000 then."

Buck Goes to College

When the kids who watched the early TV shows went to college, they began to run *Flash Gordon* and *Buck Rogers* festivals. And through this, Crabbe started touring colleges, lecturing on the films of the 30s, 40s and 50s and discussing his role in the growth of science-fiction films.

When Neil Armstrong first set foot on the Moon, Crabbe thought, "You have done Flash Gordon a dastardly deed." But it turned out he was wrong. Instead of killing interest in science fiction, it seemed to spur it.

About the current resurgence of interest in science fiction, Crabbe says, "I think it's fine for now. I don't think it will last. You can only take so many on the screen."

He was disappointed in *Alien*. "They told me it was so damn scary. I thought it was slow. They had so many of those long trucking shots walking down the alley. The girl was good, but the shocker-type language wasn't necessary. I'm not squeamish about sex, but these things are not going to help the film a damn bit."

Star Wars, on the other hand, he feels was

"good clean fun. I thought it was great. I saw it three times, and I look forward to seeing it again.

"I went the first time to see what kind of reaction it got from the kids. Before it started, the kids were all over the place, but once that thing started, they never moved. They were fascinated by it. And the Wookie—they just loved him.

"The next time I went to study the technical side of it. I thought it was very well done. I think Harrison Ford had a lot to do with the devil-may-care thing that is happening—even in the new *Buck Rogers*. He was great. He wrapped that picture up. I couldn't stand Carrie Fisher. I thought there was a hardness about her that I didn't see with the women I worked with—Connie Moore (Wilma Deering) or Jean Rogers (Dale Arden)."

Crabbe almost had a small part in *Star Wars*, and regrets not getting it. "Lucas," he explains, "suggested to the production department, 'Why don't you fly Crabbe over? We'll set him in with all the characters from the bar.' But they didn't buy the idea. I would have done it for nothing—just the transportation—to be in the film."

Another film Crabbe had hoped to participate in is Dino De Laurentiis' remake of *Flash Gordon*.

"But now," says Crabbe, "there's not a chance. I gave that up four or five months

ago. I could not hurt the film by playing Flash's father. It would be a plus factor for De Laurentiis. But he doesn't want a father—so that's out. It's too bad.

"But De Laurentiis is an extrovert. There's only one way to do things—his way. So he remakes *King Kong*—it goes flat on its ass; goes back and remakes *Hurricane*—flat on its ass. Now he's coming up with *Flash Gordon*. You wonder. . . .

"He was supposed to start this thing in October 1977. He should have! In the meantime, everybody got ahead of him. *Superman*—fantastic. *Buck Rogers* is out ahead of him. There was no real competition from *Battlestar Gallactica*, but that was ahead of him. There have been others recently. He missed the boat."

In the new TV *Buck Rogers*, Crabbe does note some differences in addition to the technical ones. "We played it more seriously [in the serial]. Then you had to because that was what people expected. Gil does the 'big takes' and stuff like that. . . .

"Also, there are changes in attitudes on the set. People are much friendlier around here. Now if you blow a line, it's a big joke. Then it wasn't tolerated. We had 85 set-ups a day—now there are only something like 10."

For the future, this debonaire man of 71 who keeps his weight at roughly the same it was when he was playing Flash and Buck by swimming between 1,000 and 3,000 yards daily, hopes to "live a long time." He also wouldn't mind returning to do occasional appearances on future episodes of *Buck Rogers*.

"They wouldn't miss anything if they had me back every second or third episode. They could put Commander Gordon in semi-active service. There is some value to a name. A lot of people know me in this country who have been with me since they were knee-high. Now they have their own children. We'll see." ★



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Rumblings

(continued from page 47)

it helps if there is a lot of love, and a lot of films that do get made have no love in them at all (and it shows)—but if the money isn't convinced, then it will never be a movie. As we say in the unreal world of Hollywood, the bottom line is the money.

Notice how it's said: "the money."

As if there are no people attached to it. It's "the money." (Maybe it's because when money talks in Hollywood, it usually says, "Bend over.")

But there is a bright side to the story.

One of the arguments we heard about the fan-financed *Star Trek* movie was that "it will never work. It's never been done before."

Sound familiar...?

Maybe that's why it should be tried.

Doesn't that thought tickle your fancy, just a little bit? You don't need one person with \$7,000,000 if you have two with \$3,500,000, or 20 each with \$350,000. In fact, the more people you have, the less money each one needs to invest.

And you don't have to raise the whole \$7,000,000 from fans, just \$2,000,000 would be a good start. You can probably presell the picture to television for at least \$1,000,000, and Bank of America sometimes invests half the cost of a motion picture, believe it or not, and it's not unheard of for a distribution company to come in for a third. So...suppose, just suppose, you had this wonderful team of people, all ready to go to work tomorrow on a movie that could maybe be another *Forbidden Planet* or *War of the Worlds*, and all they need is the money—it makes your mouth water, doesn't it?

Mine too.

There's got to be a way.

Certainly there are plenty of you out there who have resources that you could invest in a dream if you only knew where or how. I mean, how many times in life do you get an opportunity to bet on your heroes?

But...how to do it? It's a question that I very much would like to know the answer to. For a lot of reasons—reasons like *Stranger in a Strange Land*, *Dune*, *Childhood's End*, *Starship Troopers*, *Martians Go Home*, *The Stars My Destination*, a new *War of the Worlds*, *Ringworld* (sigh), and maybe even *Deathbeast*...

Well, I'm convinced. Just thinking about the books that I wanted to list in that last paragraph put me into a 20-minute reverie at my typewriter. If any of you reading this have any ideas on how a group of independent individuals, all of whom share a dream to see one more terrific science-fiction film, can raise \$7,000,000 (or if any of you have \$7,000,000 or a reasonable portion thereof), don't keep it to yourself. Write me immediately. (No phone calls, please. It has to be in writing.)

Half the fun of dreaming dreams is dreaming how to make them real. The other half of the fun is *making* them real. ★

FUTURE CONVENTIONS

Here is the latest listing of the upcoming conventions. If you have any questions about the cons listed, please send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the address below the name of the con. As always, guests and features are subject to last-minute changes. **Conventioners, please note:** To insure that your con is listed on our calendar, please send all pertinent information no later than **6 months** prior to the event to STARLOG Convention Calendar, 475 Park Ave. South, New York, NY 10016.

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Academy of Science Fiction
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Los Angeles, CA 90037

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Atlanta Star Trek Society
c/o Owen C. Ogletree, Jr.
426 Brannan Road
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LUB-CON I (Trek/SF/Horror)

Lubbock, TX November 2-4, 1979
Star Trek Fan Club
c/o Mark Gonzales
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Lubbock, TX 79416

LIBRARACON I

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The Force
3027 Gurnee Ave.
Anniston, AL 36201

FUTURE PARTY (SF/Fact)

Albany, NY November 22-25, 1979
C. Bunt
Highland Hills 606
E. Greenbush, NY 12061

ULTRACON (Fantasy/SF)

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Omnibus Publishing Co.
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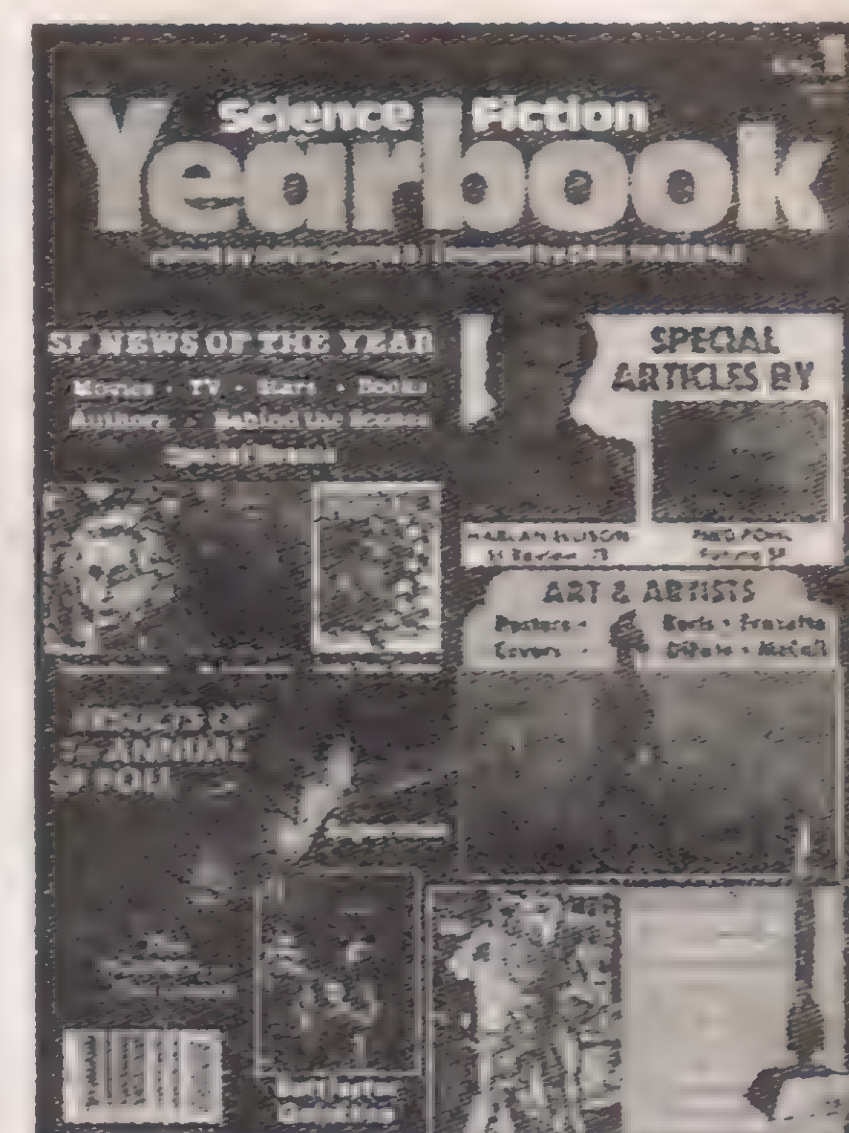
New York, NY November 23-25, 1979
The Space: 1999 Society
Box 11123
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Manchester, England November 24-25, 1979
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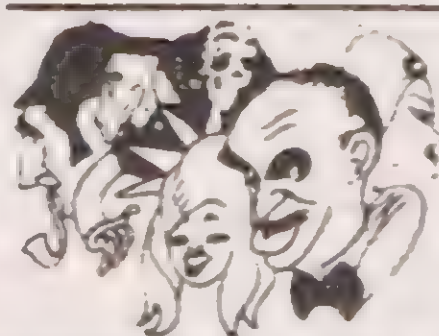
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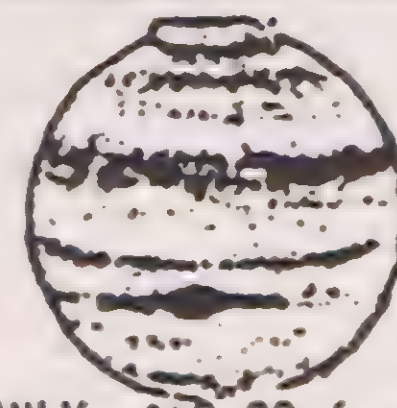


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Erin Gray

(continued from page 30)

Does She or Doesn't She

Because of this wish to remain a model, Gray is anxious to preserve those assets which allow her to do it—especially her hair. For this reason, she was reluctant to bleach her naturally dark hair blonde again for the part of Wilma in the *Buck Rogers* series, as she did for the movie.

"I bleached my hair twice for the movie, but to do it a third time could really jeopardize my hair. All you have then is straw-like blonde hair. So we have compromised for the series, and I've got it two-toned—blonde in front and dark in the back."

In addition to the change in hair color, the series' Wilma will also be dressed somewhat differently, according to Gray. "There will be a lot of wardrobe changes. I'll even get to vamp it up once in a while as I play an undercover agent. In one I'm a lady of the night."

"I'm hoping that maybe in one scene I could play a night club singer on another planet as a cover. If Gil (Buck) can teach me a song from the present time, it would guarantee to get me a job because it would be so unusual to the 25th-century audience—they'd never have heard anything like this. It could give Gil a chance to sing (he's got a very good voice), and I could do my night club act."

The new Wilma, says Gray, "will no longer be a love interest. Or, let's put it this way: We never know *what* is exactly happening between her and Buck. Basically, Wilma and Buck are good friends who are equals in their abilities—whether it's piloting, setting strategy or even engaging in dog fights. And the two of them tease each other a lot."

Away from the cameras, Gray says, she and Gil Gerard, "throw barbs at each other, but they're always playful. He has a lady, and I'm happily married; so it doesn't go beyond that. We're both playful and childlike, and we bring that out in each other."

"I was like the kid with the biggest toy on the block," she adds, "when I had to get into that starship, fly it and shoot its guns. There was one moment when the director, Dan Howe, said, 'Okay, Erin, I'd like you to bend to the left and shoot; then bank to the right and shoot.' I said, 'Dan, could you do something for me? I want to bank to the right and shoot, bank to the left and shoot—then I want to *bomb*.' The grips and prop men were then rolling on the floor—laughing. They couldn't believe how much I was enjoying the whole thing!"

During the interval between playing Wilma in the movie and being selected to play her in the series, Gray said she had mixed feelings.

"I'm very practical, as well as emotional, she explains. "So my practical side said, 'My goodness, a TV show would be wonderful—the experience would be incredible.' But the emotional side would say, 'You can't. You can't live with her. You mustn't do that.' So I was split. But now with the changes that have been made I'm flying higher than a kite." ★

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SEX

SPECIAL EFFECTS

PART XXIII:

STARLOG concludes its two part tribute to Les Bowie with a look at his years with the Hammer horror flicks.

SERIES EDITED BY DAVID HUTCHISON

Les Bowie: The Father of British Special Effects

BY AL TAYLOR & DAVID HUTCHISON

Les Bowie, as a freelance special-effects supervisor, worked on such films as *2001*, *Dr. Strangelove*, *Battle of Britain*, *Star Wars*, *Superman* and, at the time of his death, the Frank Langella *Dracula*. But he built his reputation working on the Hammer horror films, 75 percent of which bear his work. The Hammer effects budget was very short on money, but Bowie was very long on imagination.

Terence Fisher, one of the Hammer directors, began his long association with Les Bowie at the start of the Hammer projects which lasted some 15 years. Of Les Bowie, Fisher says, "He was a remarkable, warm, spontaneous person. He had an unbounded enthusiasm for overcoming the nearly impossible demands on his technical knowledge, ingenuity and imagination. His contributions usually came at climatic moments in the storyline of a film—moments when it would have been fatal to lose one's grip on the audience's emotions and visual acceptance of what they were watching. Les never allowed them to get off the hook. I am deeply grateful for his contributions to the films I directed."

Actor Christopher Lee depended on Bowie's contributions for certain sequences in *Dracula*, *Prince of Darkness*, such as the one in which Lee, as Dracula, slid on a pivoting sheet of ice beneath the surface to his death. Lee applauds Bowie's skill.

"As an artist, Bowie complemented the work of the actor, the cameraman and the director—it really was a team. I find that today, in so many of these films, the work of the actor is swamped by the special effects. Les Bowie's effects worked for us and with

us. His work became a part of the performance on the screen."

Peter Cushing, famous for his macabre roles, adds, "One of the hallmarks of a true craftsman is that the effort behind any project is never apparent. All the thought, ingenuity and sheer hard work, plus an inventive imagination, are covered up by the creator and the end result is usually perfection. Les Bowie, whose motto surely was 'The impossible will take a few hours, miracles a little longer,' possessed these qualities in rich abundance. His good humor and enthusiasm made it a pleasure to work with him."

As a departure from Hammer's regular fare of horror, *Pirates of Blood River* was produced as an adventure film. For this film, directed by John Gilling in 1961, Bowie created a number of beautiful matte paintings of tall ships and built a few pirate galleons. One sequence required a school of piranha to attack and kill a young girl. For close-ups Bowie covered fake fish with silver paper; then to suggest the school moving across the water to attack, he sprayed a stream of leadshot in the air, which would fall with hundreds of tiny splashes in the water. As he gradually decreased the angle of the stream, the tiny splashes came closer and closer to the girl—suggesting real piranha coming in for the kill. Finally, Bowie sprayed the lead in a circle around the girl, she gave a blood curdling scream and went under the water.

Kiss of the Vampire, released by Hammer in 1961, directed by Don Sharp and remembered as one of the most intelligent vampire tales, has a number of interesting

Bowie sequences. As in most Hammer films, we can see the beautiful Bowie castles painted on eerie mountaintops, but the final scenes required vampire bats to destroy the human vampires. This awesome finale used a broad repertory of techniques. At first the bats swarm out of their cavern heading for the chateau of the human vampires. This sequence called for the use of animation. Then the attacking bats burst through the skylight in the roof of the chateau; here Bowie rigged a number of rubber bats and suspended them from the ceiling. Though Bowie fought constantly to keep the bats from getting tangled, the shadows of the bats soaring are quite remarkable. Finally, the vampire bats are seen crawling on their human hosts. These bats were built to adhere to human skin and could be manipulated with fine nylon cords.

For the *Satanic Rites of Dracula*, a real Hawthorne bush was used, since no rubber thorn could match the sharp claw-like look of the immense thorns of the Hawthorne. Lee, again in the *Dracula* role, is caught in the bush (the reference here is to Christ's crown of thorns) and impaled by Dr. Van Helsing, played by Peter Cushing. After the live-action scenes with Lee in the bush (Lee avows that the blood in that sequence is real—it's his!), Bowie used a number of dummies and slow dissolves to portray Dracula's demise.

The immensity of the work achieved by Bowie during these Hammer years is further remarked upon by Christopher Lee: "He was really a master at creating a mountain out of a molehill—in the very best sense of the word. He never, or very seldom, had at



Les Bowie shows off his hand-puppet version of the demonic baby used in Hammer's *To the Devil... a Daughter*.

“I am sure he could have excelled as an illustrator if the film industry had not existed. I remember a storyboard sequence which he prepared for a film I was working on—I thought it better than the film.”

—Roy Ashton

his disposal complicated, expensive equipment and facilities. He didn't have vast laboratory resources, so a great deal of the work came out of his own mind—his own brain. He had to combine the talents of alchemist, necromancer, magician and chemist—which he did remarkably well.”

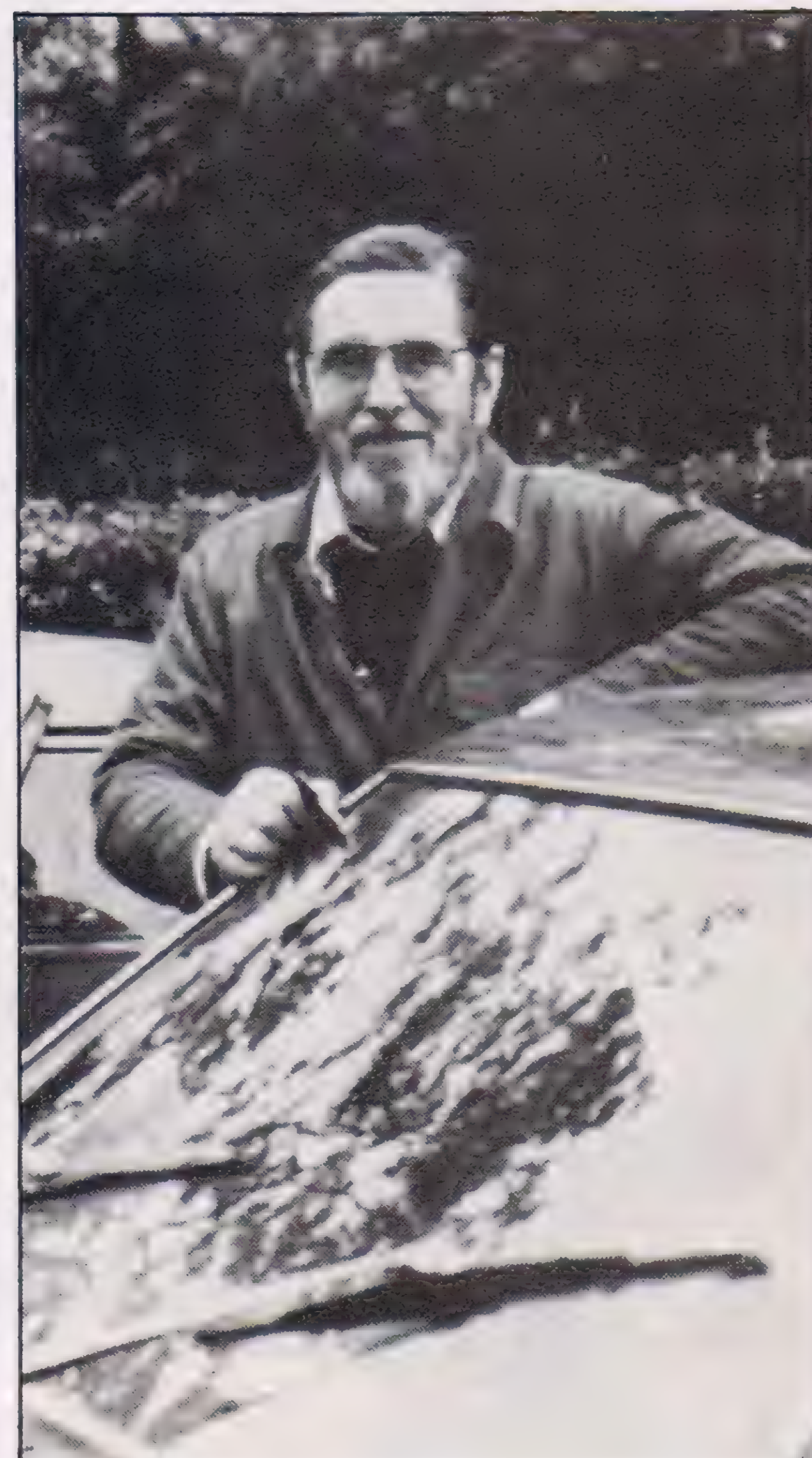
Bowie once said, “I always wish I could spend more on my effects...I never have enough money. But I just have to accept this, because that is the sort of special-effects man I am—I specialize in doing effects for people with little money to spend.”

Derek Meddings worked for Bowie as a matte artist for a time during the Hammer years. “When we were not painting mattes,”

says Meddings, smiling “we would be up to our eyeballs in blood and gore for the Hammer films. If it weren't for Les, the Hammer horror films would have been for ‘kiddiwinks.’ Les worked on lots of low-budget films and because of his skill gave them an expensive look.”

Les Bowie worked with Ray Harryhausen on Hammer's *One Million Years B.C.*, and later on the Harryhausen/Schneer projects *First Men in the Moon*, *Jason and the Argonauts* and *Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger*.

Les Bowie, arriving home—a personal photograph.



"His remarkable technical knowledge," recalls Harryhausen, "his boyish enthusiasm for all projects big and small and his ability to paint a convincing matte shot or build a realistic miniature all added up to make him rather a unique person. It was always a pleasure and joy to work with him"

Bowie Films, Ltd., the name of his thriving special-effects company, at its peak employed a staff of more than 70 and did £ 250,000 worth of business a year—a good deal of it for the Hammer films. It was in 1968, when the British film industry was going through a bit of a depression, that Bowie Films, Ltd. was taken over by Shepperton Studios.

Did Bowie regret his unit's passing? "We've all got to go our own ways," said Bowie. "It just seems I'm not going to have a staff of my own."

But during those golden years for Bowie, he trained many of the special-effects supervisors that are garnering international

reputations today. Roy Field, optical supervisor on *Superman*, believes, "I personally think that Les was the father of modern special effects in England. He gave many young people a chance to start in the industry. If you look at many of the special-effects supervisors today, you will find many of 'Les' Boys'.

"His words to me when we started *Superman* three years ago, were, 'I think this is the picture I can at last win an Oscar with.' He went on to say, 'It's alright for you, you're young enough for another chance, but I am getting old and this may be my last.' Little did I realize that this would be true."

Of course, Les Bowie was part of the team that won the Oscar for *Superman's* special effects, but, unfortunately, was the only member of that team that wasn't present to accept the award in Los Angeles. He did not even know that he had won the award. Roy Field expressed his thanks to Bowie in public that evening of the awards. "Three of us on

this team—Colin Chilvers, Derek Meddings and myself—owe to Les the chance of being here tonight. He was always very proud, as he said to me on the start of *Superman*, that his boys all have done so well and all made it to the top. People like Brian Johnson, Derek Meddings, Colin Chilvers and myself and many, many others, all were Les' Boys. His contribution to the British Film Industry is tremendous and it owes him a great deal."

Shortly after he died, Bowie's daughter, Hilarie, found a letter from Richard Donner among Bowie's papers which simply said, "Dear Les, you made me believe!"

"I know those words are the ones he would most like to have heard," says Hilarie Bowie, who worked with her father for many years. "When my father died, one of my children said that if Superman had known, he would have turned back the world (as he did in the film). He made my children believe and that is what he did for us all—he made us believe." ★

LES BOWIE Filmography



- 1946— *School for Secrets*
Director: Peter Ustinov
- 1947— *Great Expectations*
Director: David Lean
Stars: John Mills, Valerie Hobson
- 1948— *Oliver Twist*
Director: David Lean
Stars: Alec Guinness, Robert Newton
- 1948— *The Red Shoes*
Director: Michael Powell
Stars: Moira Shearer, Anton Walbrook, Marius Goring
- 1949— *Madeleine*
Director: Kurt Meisel
Stars: Eva Bartok, Sabina Sesselmann
- The History of Mr. Polly*
Director: Anthony Pelissier
Stars: John Mills, Sally Ann Howes
- 1953— *The Master of Ballantrae*
Director: William Keighley
Stars: Errol Flynn, Yvonne Furneaux
- 1954— *The Dam Busters*
Director: Michael Anderson
Stars: Richard Todd, Michael Redgrave
- 1956— *The Quatermass Xperiment*
(U.S. Title: *Creeping Unknown*)
(Hammer)
Director: Val Guest

Left: Plastic was used to create "frozen" illusion in *Evil of Frankenstein*.



PHOTOS: © 1973 WARNER BROS.

Trapped in the Hawthorne bush at the climax of *Satanic Rites of Dracula* with Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing, smoke issues forth from Dracula's costume as the disintegration begins. In a later stage, Dracula's flesh has turned to dust with only the skeleton remaining. The effect was accomplished with a series of slow dissolves from set-up to set-up.

SPECIAL EFFECTS

Stars: Brian Donlevy, Richard Wordsworth and Margia Dean
X—The Unknown (Hammer)

Director: Leslie Norman
Stars: Dean Jagger, Leo McKern

1957— *Enemy from Space* (U.K. Title: *Quatermass II*) (Hammer)
Director: Val Guest
Stars: Brian Donlevy, Michael Ripper
Curse of Frankenstein

(Hammer)
Director: Terrence Fisher
Stars: Peter Cushing, Christopher Lee

1958— *The Mummy* (Hammer)
Director: Terrence Fisher
Stars: Peter Cushing, Christopher Lee, Yvonne Furneaux
1960— *Swiss Family Robinson* (Walt Disney)
Director: Ken Annakin

Stars: John Mills, Dorothy McGuire

The Curse of the Werewolf (Hammer Films)

Director: Terrence Fisher
Stars: Oliver Reed, Clifford Evans, Yvonne Romain
The Brides of Dracula (Hammer)

Director: Terrence Fisher
Stars: David Peel, Peter Cushing, Yvonne Monlaur
(Syd Pearson did special effects; Bowie did the castle matte paintings.)

1962— *Captain Clegg* (U.S. Title: *Night Creature*) (Hammer)

Director: Terrence Fisher
Stars: Peter Cushing, Oliver Reed, Yvonne Romain
The Day the Earth Caught Fire

Director: Val Guest
Stars: Edward Judd, Janet Munro, Michael Goodliffe
The Pirates of Blood River (Hammer)

Director: John Gilling
Stars: Christopher Lee, Oliver Reed, Kerwin Mathews

1963— *Jason and the Argonauts*
Director: Don Chaffey
Stars: Todd Armstrong, Nancy Kovack

(Ray Harryhausen Special Effects; Bowie did matte paintings and model work.)

Paranoiac (Hammer)
Director: Freddie Francis
Stars: Janet Scott, Oliver Reed

1964— *First Men in the Moon*
Director: Nathan Juran
Stars: Edward Judd, Martha Hyer, Lionel Jeffries
(Ray Harryhausen special effects; Bowie did models and matte paintings.)

Kiss of the Vampire (Hammer)
Director: Don Sharp
Stars: Clifford Evans, Noel Willman, Edward de Souza, Jennifer Daniel

Devil-Ship Pirates (Hammer)
Director: Don Sharp
Stars: Christopher Lee, Andrew Kier, Michael Ripper
Dr. Strangelove

Director: Stanley Kubrick
Stars: Peter Sellers, George C. Scott, Slim Pickens
The Evil of Frankenstein (Hammer)

Director: Freddie Francis
Stars: Peter Cushing, Kiwi Kingston, Duncan Lamont

1965— *She* (Hammer)
Director: Robert Day
Stars: Christopher Lee, Peter Cushing, Ursula Andress, John



PHOTOS: © 1973 WARNER BROS.

From Christopher Lee's living hand, to a smoking fragment—one of Les Bowie's more interesting effects in *Satanic Rites of Dracula*.

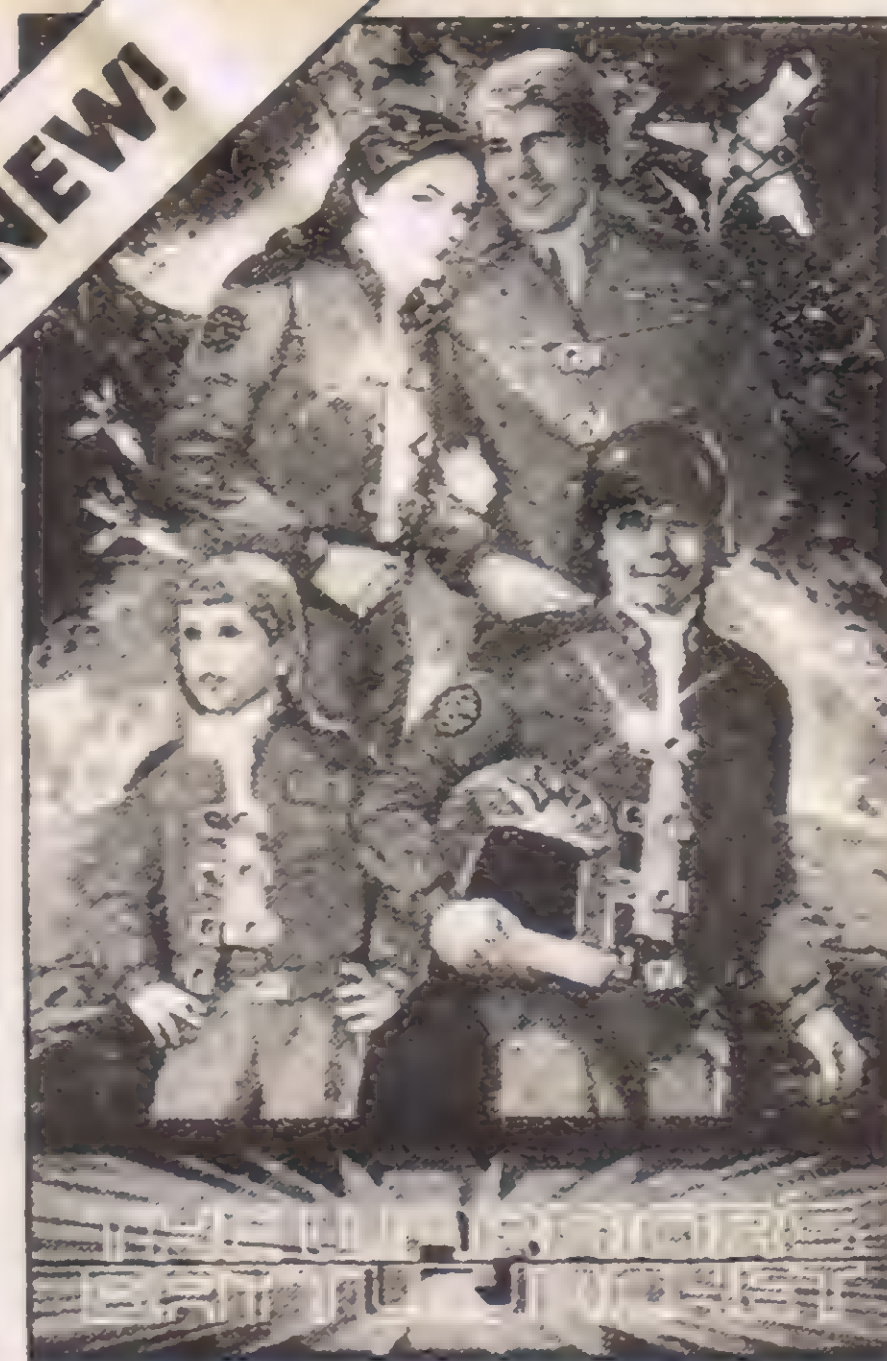


Full size galleons are expensive to rent and hard to find; Bowie used models.

- Richardson
A High Wind in Jamaica
 Director: Alexander Mackendrick
 Stars: Anthony Quinn, James Coburn
The Face of Fu Manchu
 Director: Don Sharp
 Stars: Christopher Lee, Nigel Green
- 1966— *Dracula—Prince of Darkness* (Hammer)
 Director: Terence Fisher
 Stars: Christopher Lee, Barbara Shelley, Andrew Keir
Plague of the Zombies (Hammer)
 Director: John Gilling
 Stars: Andre Morell, Diana Clare, John Carson, Jacqueline Pearce
The Reptile (Hammer)
 Director: John Gilling
 Stars: Noel Willman, Jennifer Daniel, Jacqueline Pearce, Michael Ripper
The Fighting Prince of Donegal (Disney)
 Director: Michael O'Herlihy
 Stars: Peter McEnery and Susan Hampshire
Cul De Sac
 Director: Roman Polanski
 Stars: Donald Pleasence, Francoise Dorleac
- 1967— *Frankenstein Created Woman* (Hammer)
 Director: Terence Fisher
 Stars: Peter Cushing, Susan Denberg, Thorley Walters
Billion Dollar Brain
 Director: Ken Russell
 Stars: Michael Caine, Karl Malden
The Mummy's Shroud (Hammer)
 Director: John Gilling
 Stars: John Phillips, Andre Morell
Fahrenheit 451
 Director: Francois Truffaut
 Stars: Julie Christie, Oskar Werner

- 1968— *Five Million Years to Earth* (U.K. title: *Quatermass and the Pit*—Hammer)
 Director: Roy Ward Baker
 Stars: James Donald, Andrew Keir, Barbara Shelley
2001: A Space Odyssey
 Director: Stanley Kubrick
 Stars: Kier Dullea, William Sylvester, Gary Lockwood
- 1969— *Battle of Britain*
 Director: Guy Hamilton
 Stars: Harry Andrews, Michael Caine, Trevor Howard
- 1970— *Moon Zero Two* (Hammer)
 Director: Roy Ward Baker
 Stars: James Olson, Catherine von Schell
- 1972— *Vampire Circus* (Hammer)
 Director: Robert Young
 Stars: Adrienne Corri, Laurence Payne, Thorley Walters
Dracula A.D. 1972 (Hammer)
 Director: Alan Gibson
 Stars: Christopher Lee, Peter Cushing, Stephanie Beacham
- 1973— *The Satanic Rites of Dracula* (Hammer)
 Director: Alan Gibson
 Stars: Christopher Lee, Peter Cushing, William Franklyn
Frankenstein and the Monster from Hell (Hammer)
 Director: Terence Fisher
 Stars: Peter Cushing, Shane Briant, David Prowse
- 1974— *Legend of the Seven Golden Vampires* (Hammer)
 Director: Roy Ward Baker
 Stars: Peter Cushing, David Chiang, Julie Ege
- 1976— *To the Devil... A Daughter* (Hammer)
 Director: Peter Sykes
 Stars: Christopher Lee, Richard Widmark
- 1977— *Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger*
 Director: Sam Wanamaker
 Stars: Patrick Wayne, Jane Seymour
 (Ray Harryhausen special effects; Bowie did matte paintings and models)
Star Wars
 Director: George Lucas
 Stars: Mark Hamill, Peter Cushing, David Prowse
- 1978— *Superman—The Movie*
 Director: Richard Donner
 Stars: Christopher Reeve, Gene Hackman, Marlon Brando
 (Bowie won Academy Award)
- 1978-79 *Dracula*
 Director: John Badham
 Stars: Laurence Olivier, Frank Langella, Kate Nelligon
 (Les Bowie was working on the effects when he passed away.)

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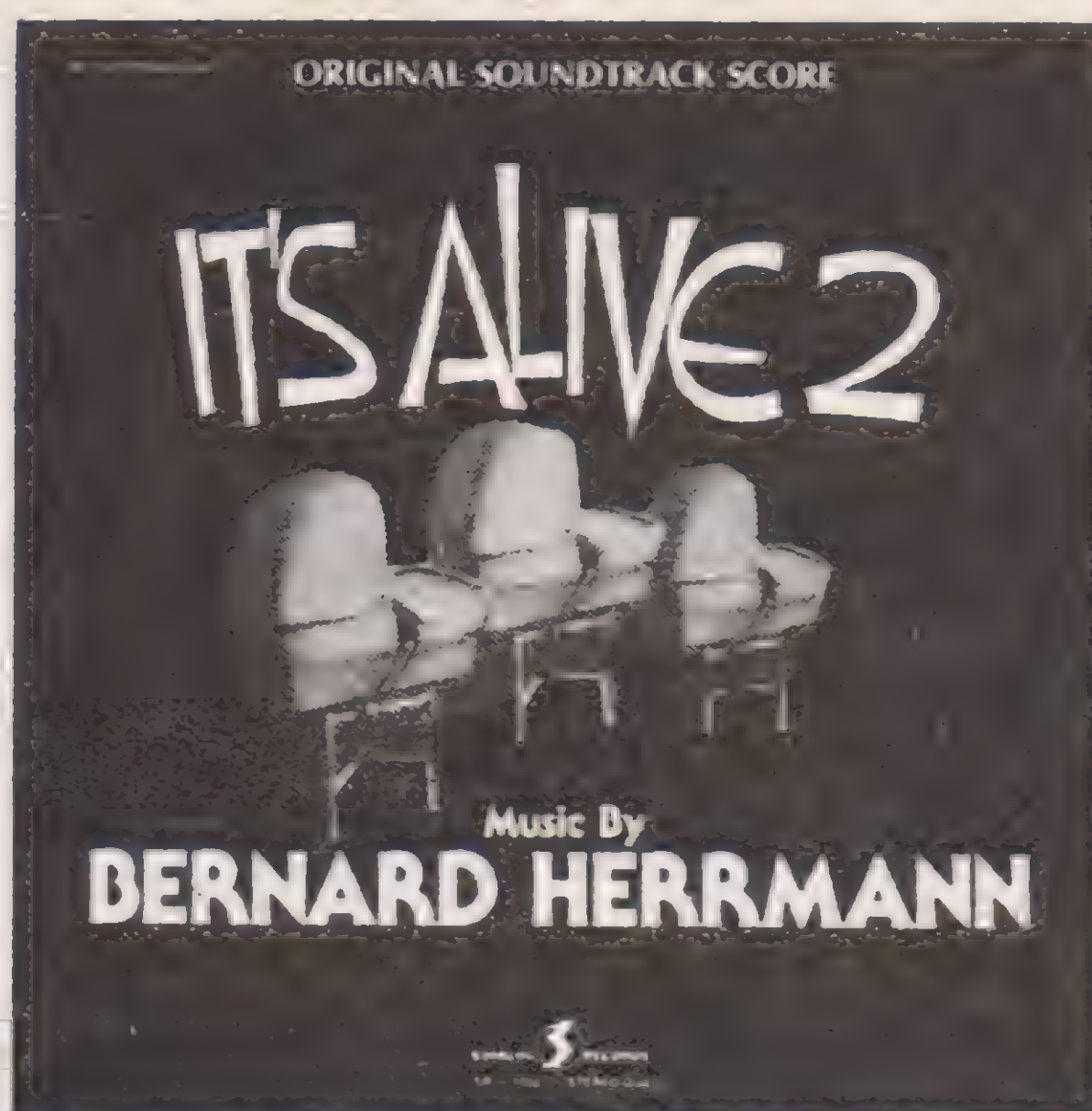
*To walk the sands of an alien world,
To feel the wind and breathe the air...
What longing lies within my soul
That stirs emotions lost in time,
That makes me crave a double-star,
A red-hued sky and rings of gold?
—To dig bare feet in dusky beach
And watch the wonders of fiery ocean—
Is it not our destiny to go
And seek fulfillment in the Void,
To sate this craving in man's soul
Before the memory is again destroyed?*

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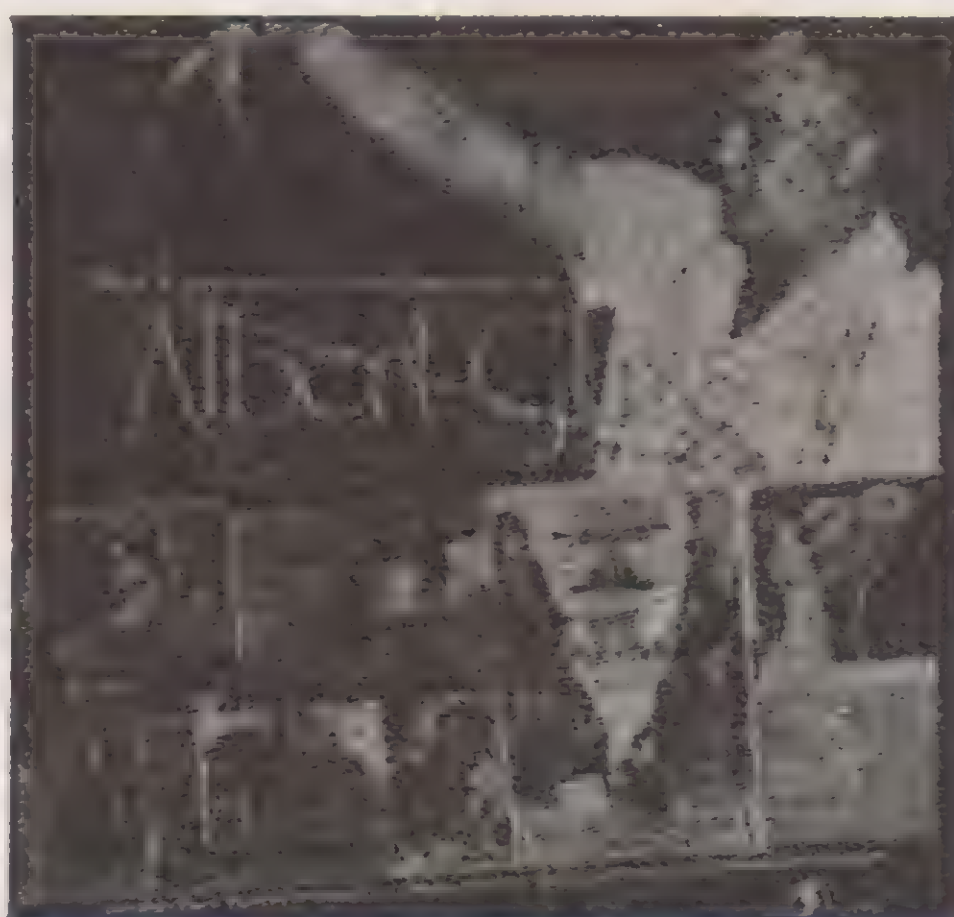
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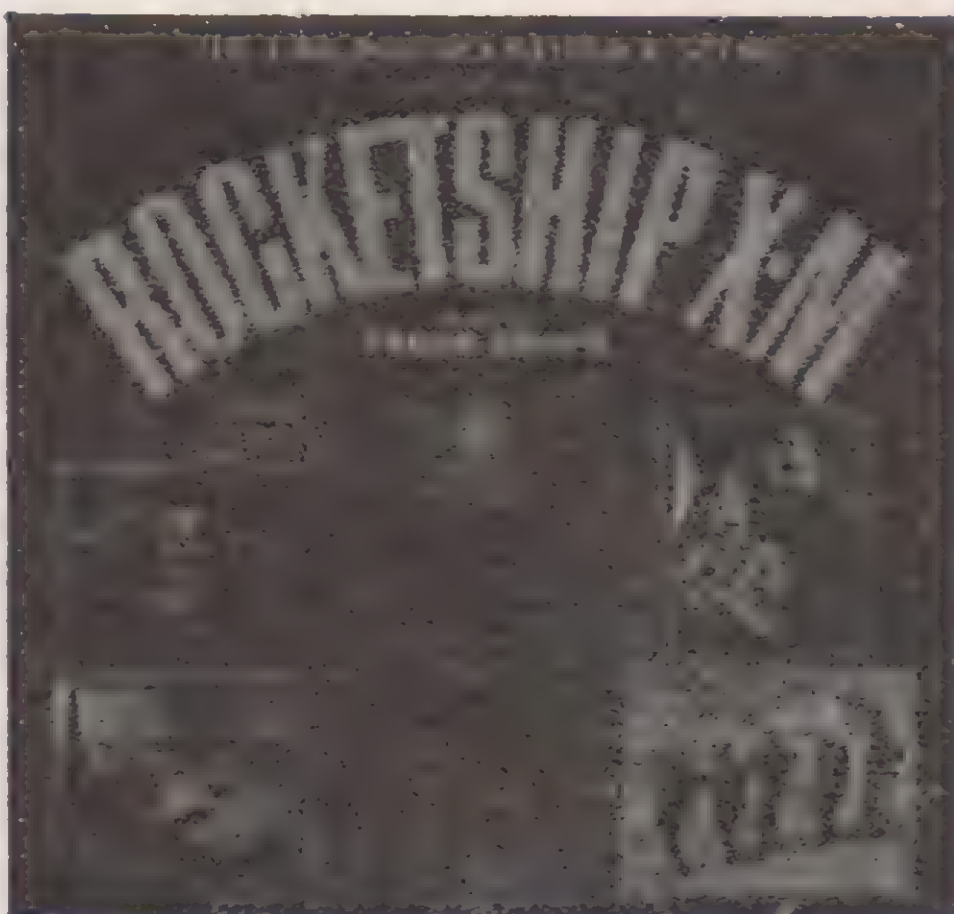
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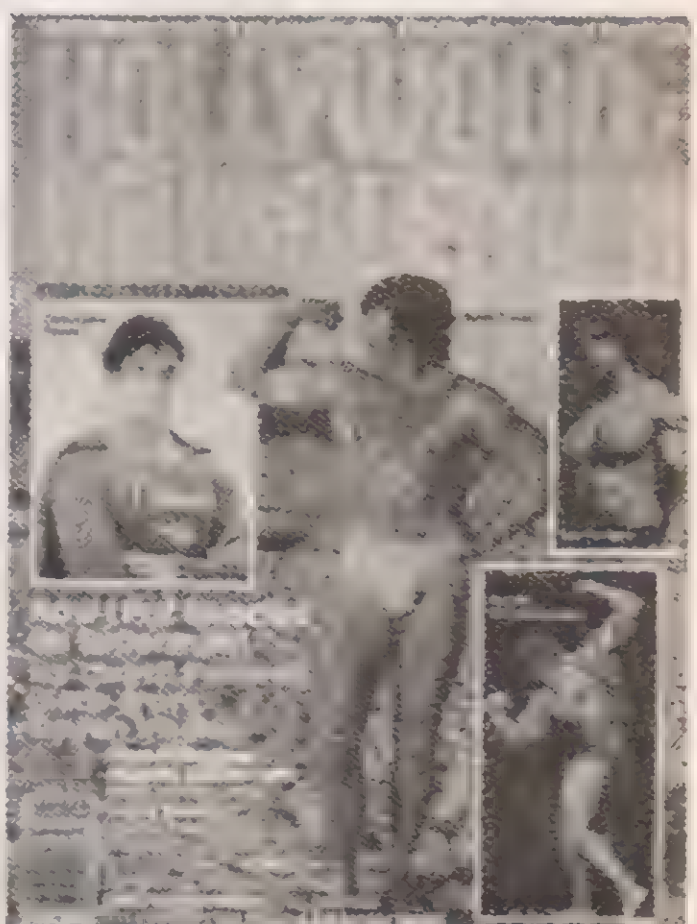
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VISIONS

Artificial Intelligence: Before the First Generation

In Fredric Brown's enduring short story, "Answer,"¹ a final wire connects all the computers of 96 billion planets into a single cybernetics machine. The switch is thrown and the first question is asked of it:

"Is there a God?"

The mighty voice answered without hesitation, without the clicking of a single relay.

"Yes, now there is a God."

When the man leaps to shut off the machine, a "bolt of lightning from the cloudless sky" kills him and fuses the switch.

"Answer" was first published in 1954, only five years after the world's first commercial computer—a single machine—went into service at IBM headquarters in New York. When Brown wrote his story about the computer's ultimate apotheosis, the Electronic Age was barely over the horizon.

The idea of artificial intelligence has been a staple in science fiction for so long that it is startling to realize that World War II was fought and won without a single electronic computer, that computers as we know them were not even available to the scientists at Los Alamos who developed the atomic bomb.

In one sense, any device other than the 10 fingers used in arithmetic can be called a computer; and the electronic computer would never have come into being without those earliest mechanical fingers: bones representing multiples of 10, the Oriental abacus (still in use today), and the primitive boxes of gears that grew in sophistication during the Renaissance and the Industrial Revolution.

A major stride occurred in 1812 when Charles Babbage, an Englishman, announced he could, in theory, calculate logarithms by machine. Although he spent 40 years attempting to construct this "analytical engine," the technology to support his theory simply did not yet exist; and he failed.

Babbage's theory, though—and the publicity attendant upon the unveiling of each bigger and better calculator—inspired the writers of imaginative fiction from H.G. Wells onward. If a machine could add, subtract, multiply and divide—feats already well beyond the brightest of the lower animals—might not machines one day think?

In a 1909 story, "Moxon's Master," Ambrose Bierce had his character wonder: "Is not a man a machine? And you will admit that he thinks—or thinks he thinks."

And in the same year, E.M. Forster, in

"The Machine Stops," imagined a society in which all decisions are made for each individual by machine—until it breaks down.

Yet at that time, the most complex "thinking" machine in existence was the cash register.

A dramatic advance in mechanical computation occurred in 1925 when Vannevar Bush finally built Babbage's "analytical engine." He constructed it at M.I.T. and called it a Differential Analyzer. Incredibly slow by today's standards, it multiplied only 100 times the amount of work a single man could accomplish at a desk calculator. The device was electro-mechanical, not electronic; still, it quickly became a valuable tool for astronomers, engineers and statistical scientists—for a good many years.

From George Pal's 1951 movie, *When Worlds Collide*:

Prof. Hendron (removing astronomical plates and sheets of figures from Dr. Bronson's case): "Give this data to D.A."

Dr. Tony Drake (explaining): "D for differential, A for analyzer—D.A."

Dave Randall (pretending to understand): "Naturally."

Bush's device was pictured and named; it was shown being used (correctly) to compute the orbits of Bellus and Zyra, and, later, the spaceship.

At the time Bush's D.A. was coming into use, a man who had started his career as a salesman of used cash registers and who now headed the immense International Business Machine Company, was obsessed by the potentials of the Analyzer. He was Thomas J. Watson.

Watson may have been the last of the great industrial empire builders—in the tradition of Morgan, Carnegie, Rockefeller and Ford—but he was not an inventor. Watson's biographer, William Rodgers², classifies the man and his contribution:

"What changed... the whole world—more than it had been changed in their time by Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, Pascal, Leibnitz, Einstein and a galaxy of immortal men of genius—and sent it spinning into the age of anxiety, space and technology was the computer: the computer harnessed to the speed of light. And Watson, in the role of a patron beyond the Medici scale, had a great deal to do with it."

Watson had the prescience to cultivate

friends and associates in the "ivory tower"—scientists and engineers at Columbia, Harvard and M.I.T. When they expressed their most far-reaching visions to him, Watson not only listened, he provided fortunes in research funds.

Watson involved his company, in 1937, with Howard Aiken—a Ph.D. candidate at Harvard—who proposed to improve on Bush's version of the Babbage computer by building it with electrical rather than mechanical switches. The result was the IBM Mark I, in 1944. It weighed two tons, contained 530 miles of wire and 765,299 parts—and it was obsolete before anyone could ask it, "What's two plus two"—much less, "Is there a God?" A Mark II became necessary; then a Mark III.

Up until the Depression, Roosevelt's New Deal and the early threats of war, private investment had been the source of computer-research capital—with Watson funding the lion's share. Isaac Asimov speculates, in an essay called "The Computer Revolution,"³ that it was probably the enactment of Social Security (August 14, 1935) that prodded the U.S. government into the funding of computer experiments. The need for massive data storage was suddenly obvious.

It was a government project that not only made obsolete the work of Aiken and Watson, but officially gave birth to the Computer Age—in 1946.

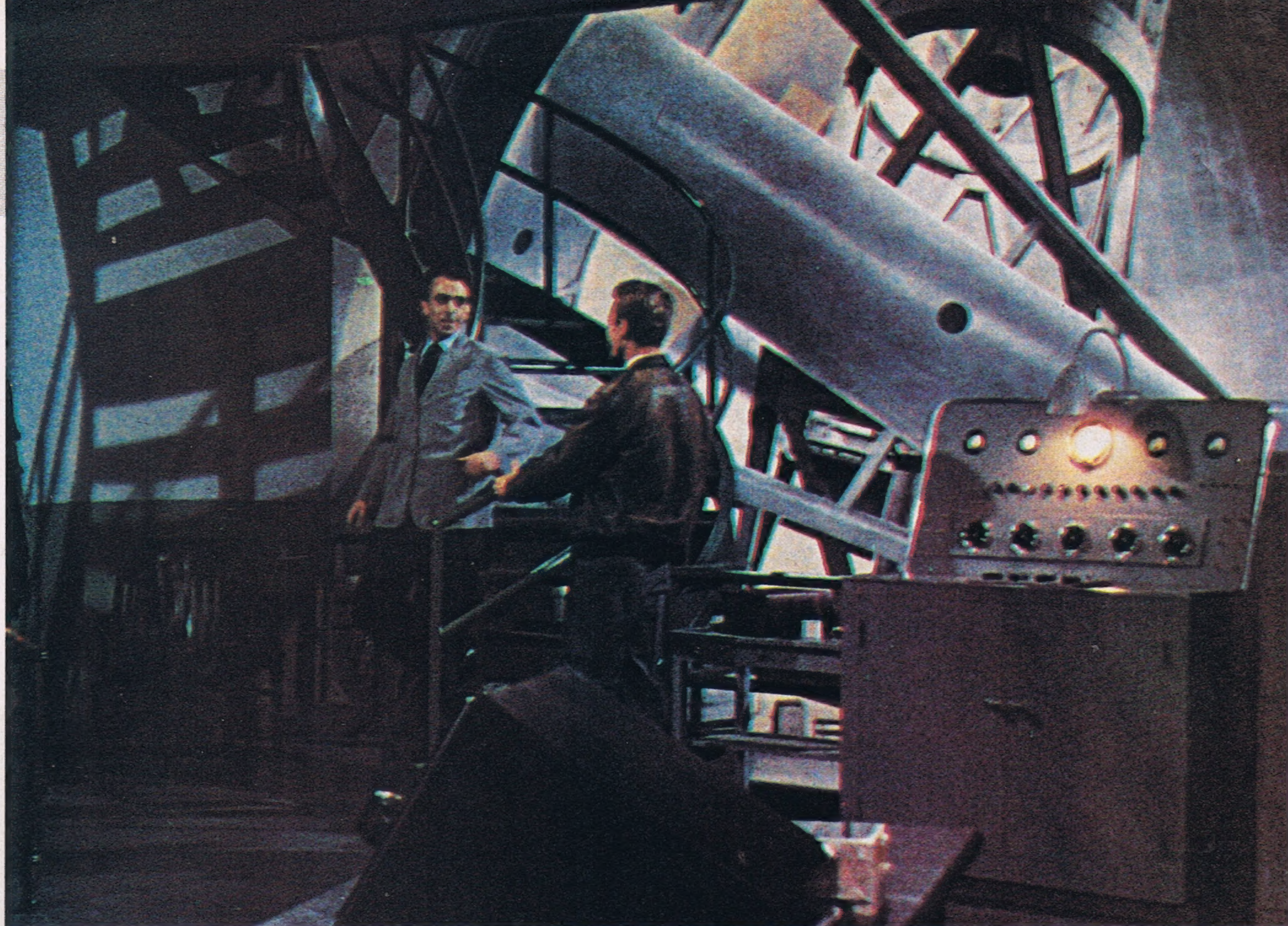
The baby was enormous. It weighed 30 tons and occupied 1,500 square feet. But its 90,000 vacuum tubes performed complex functions 10,000 times faster than the Mark I. It approached Watson's own oft-stated ideal: to work at the speed of light. The baby's name was ENIAC (Electronic Numerical Integrator and Calculator) and it was a *computer*—the first electronic computer in history.

Its developers at the University of Pennsylvania—John P. Eckert and John W. Mauchly—turned it on in 1946. It was retired—made as obsolete by IBM's commercial computers as ENIAC had once made the Mark I—in 1954.... The year "Answer" was published. ★

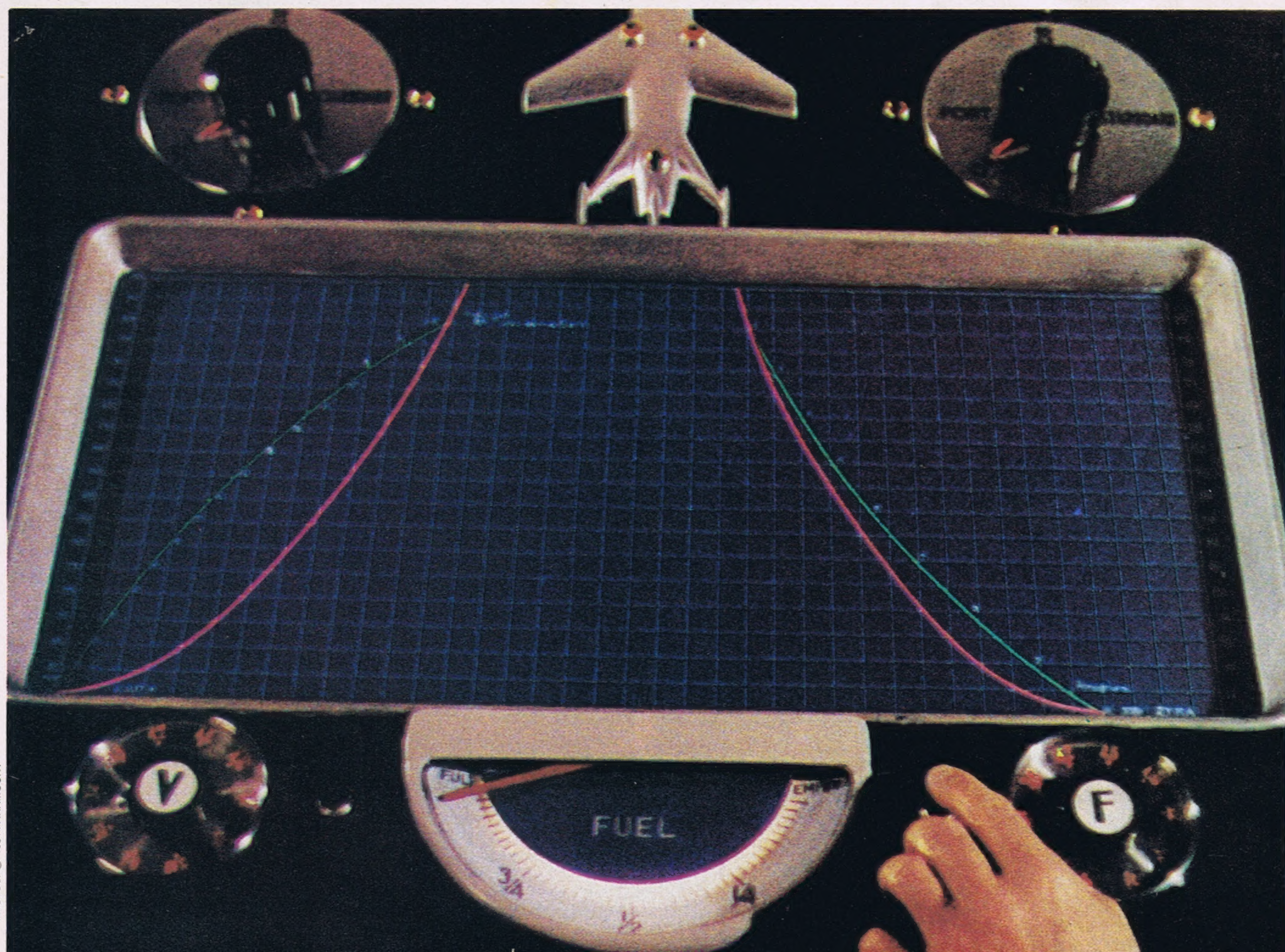
¹First published in a collection, *Angels and Spaceships*; currently available in *The Best of Fredric Brown*—Double-day hardcover, Ballantine paperback.

²*Think—A Biography of the Watsons and IBM*, by William Rodgers; Stein & Day, 1969.

³*Science Past, Science Future*, by Isaac Asimov; Doubleday, 1975.



Two scenes from the classic George Pal film, *When Worlds Collide*. Above: Dave Randall talks to Tony Drake—the “differential analyser” is in the foreground. Below: The navigational computer aboard the spaceship, located on the pilot’s console.



LASTWORD



In this issue we've broken new ground in one area and continued to explore another only lightly touched on in the past. The publication of "Starlust" (see page 71) represents our first venture into the field of illustrated SF poetry. I am excited about it and anxious for reader feedback. But I'm even more excited about being able to showcase the work (even though it's only a pencil sketch) of one of my favorite graphic storytellers, Jack Katz. Anyone who is

familiar with the continuing saga of *The First Kingdom* is aware of the higher caliber of Katz' artistic vision and storytelling abilities. For those not familiar... *The First Kingdom* is an ongoing "underground comics" epic concerned with the genesis and evolution of mankind on an intergalactic scale, brilliantly written and illustrated by Katz. To date, 10 books (32 pages each) have been published. Jack envisions the series totaling 24 chapters—each one a separate book. If you haven't yet become a *Kingdom* addict, I suggest that you seek out the books at any comics store or convention.

The other direction that we've continued to explore this issue is illustrated SF satire. In STARLOG #22 we entered the field with "Statues of the Gods," a well-received von Danikin send-up by Thomas McDonough. This issue McDonough has taken on *CE3K*, *The UFO Incident* and other tales of alien infiltration in "Unidentified Talking Objects," ably illustrated by artist Tom Kidd. The fun begins on page 52.

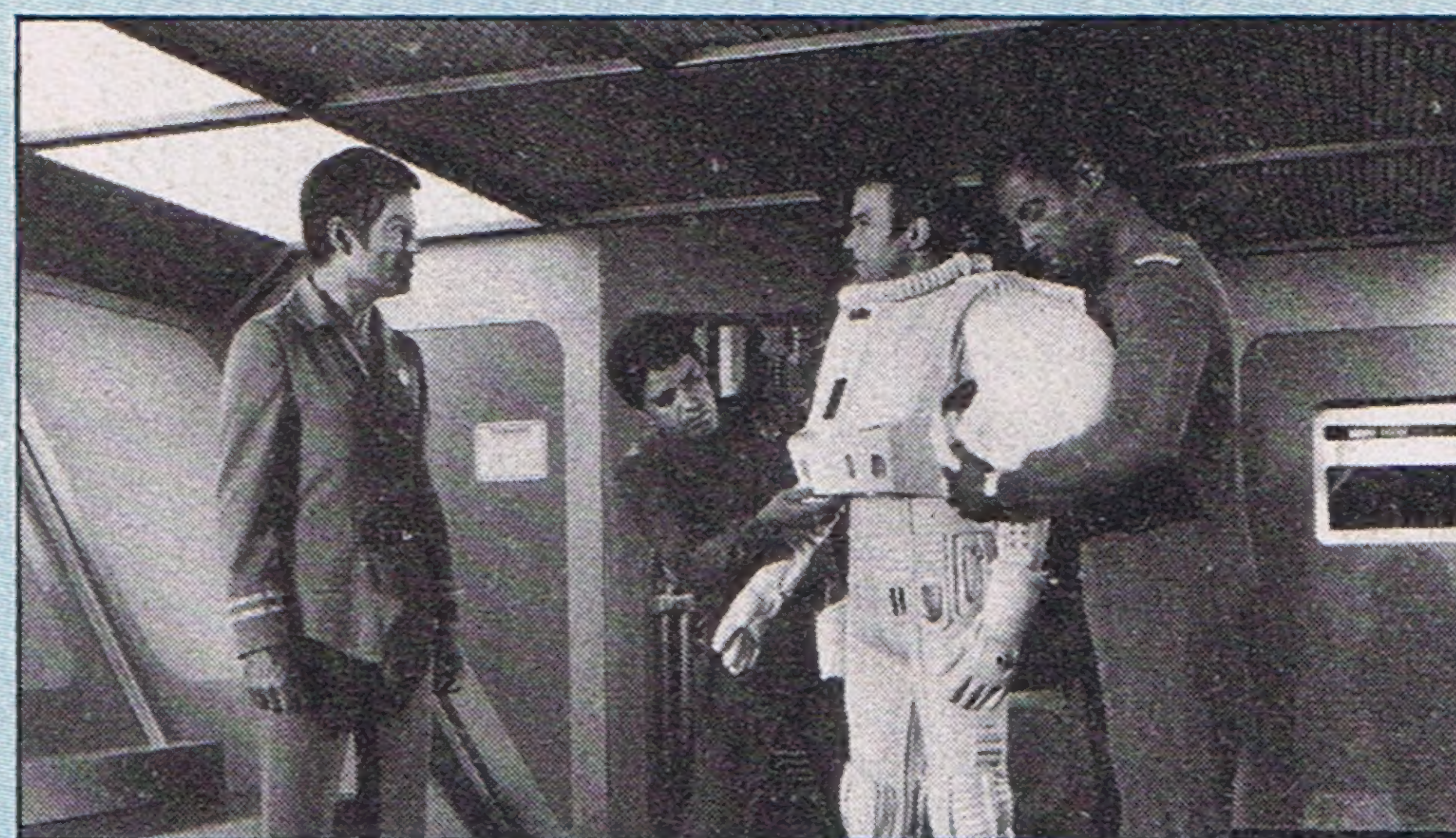


Would you like to see more illustrated SF satire, poetry or both—or neither? Please let us know.

Meanwhile, in the next issue of STARLOG we take another step in the direction of "graphically illustrated" features. I'm pleased to announce that #30 will feature the first installment of what will become (if the response is positive) a continuing feature. It is called "Great Moments in Science Fiction" and is written by myself and illustrated by one of the comics world's foremost artists of action and adventure, Billy Graham. Billy is probably best-remembered by Marvel Comics readers for the brilliant *Black Panther* series he produced with writer Don McGregor a couple of years ago, "Panther's Rage!" It is acknowledged in fan circles as one of the best continuing adventures that Marvel has published. We are delighted to be able to showcase Billy's work in the pages of STARLOG.

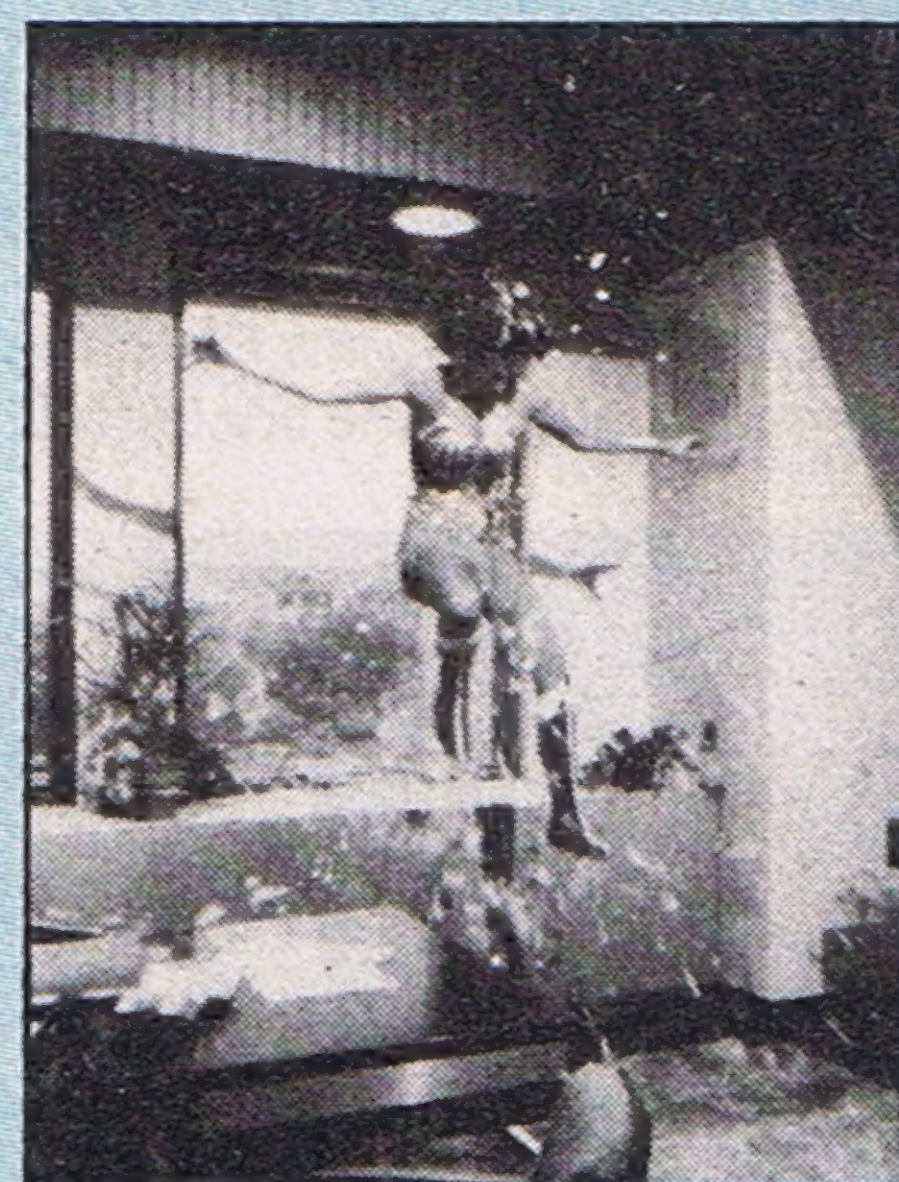
Howard Zimmerman
Howard Zimmerman/Editor

NEXT MONTH



"STAR TREK"

In STARLOG #30 we present a sneak preview of *Star Trek—The Motion Picture*, including incredible four-color photos that are guaranteed to knock you out of orbit! Our coverage from behind the scenes will feature interviews with director Robert Wise and set designer Harold Michaelson, and we'll be excerpting from Walter Koenig's forthcoming book on the making of the film, *Chekov's Enterprise*.



THE SF STUNT-WOMEN

The invisible superheroes of science-fiction media are that awesome group of wonder-workers known as professional stuntwomen. We'll have the fascinating story of who they are and some of the stunts they've performed.

"THE QUESTOR TAPES"

Generally acknowledged as one of Gene Roddenberry's best efforts, *Questor* was one of those ideas that died before it was really given a chance. We'll look back at Roddenberry's original design for the pilot/series and see how and why it was changed. It's an illuminating look at how decisions affecting the life of a TV show are made.

ALSO

We'll be premiering a new, illustrated feature, "Great Moments in Science Fiction," and David Houston traces the history of "Artificial Intelligence" in *Visions*—and there'll be a surprise SFX-TRA about filming one of the most difficult of cinematic effects.

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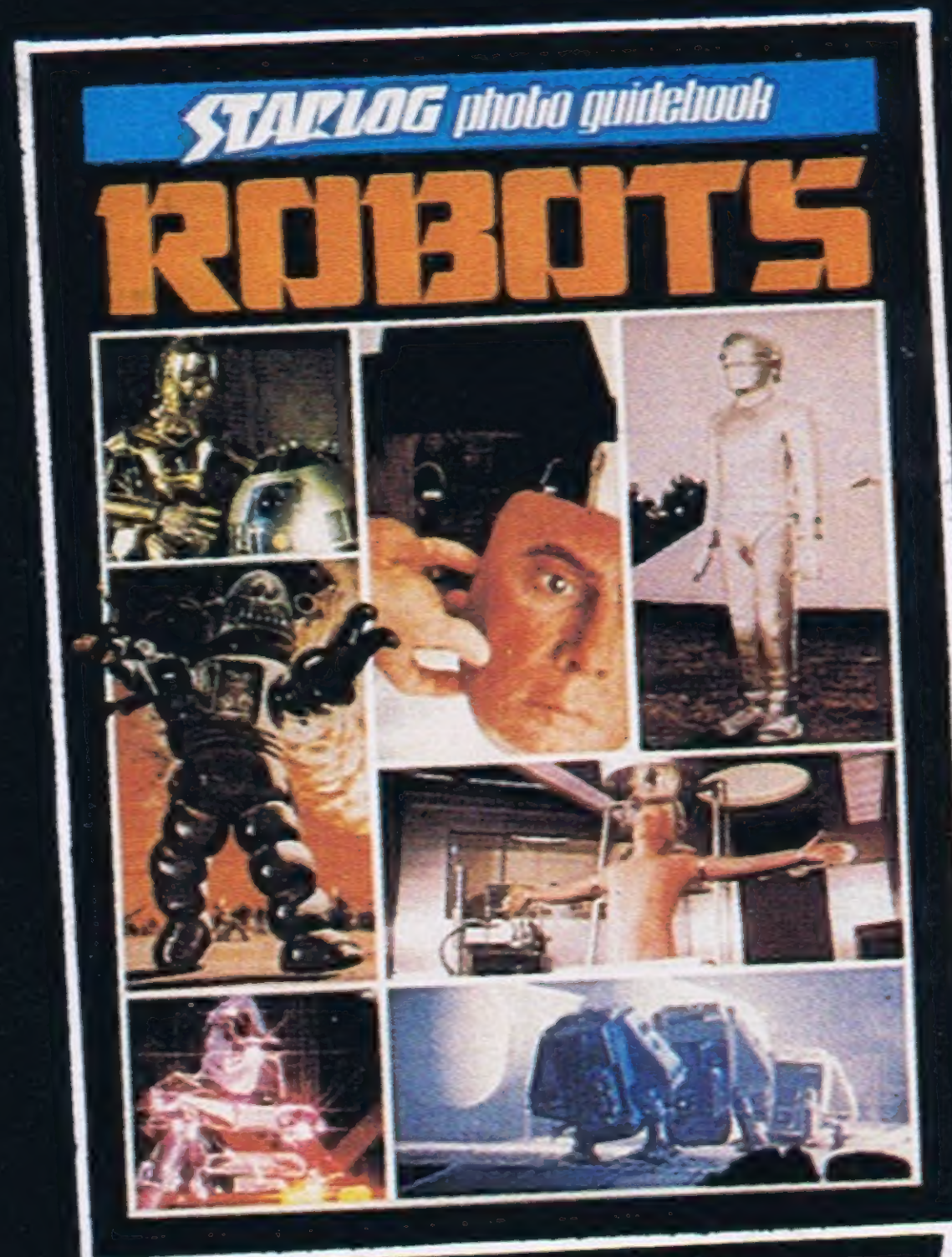
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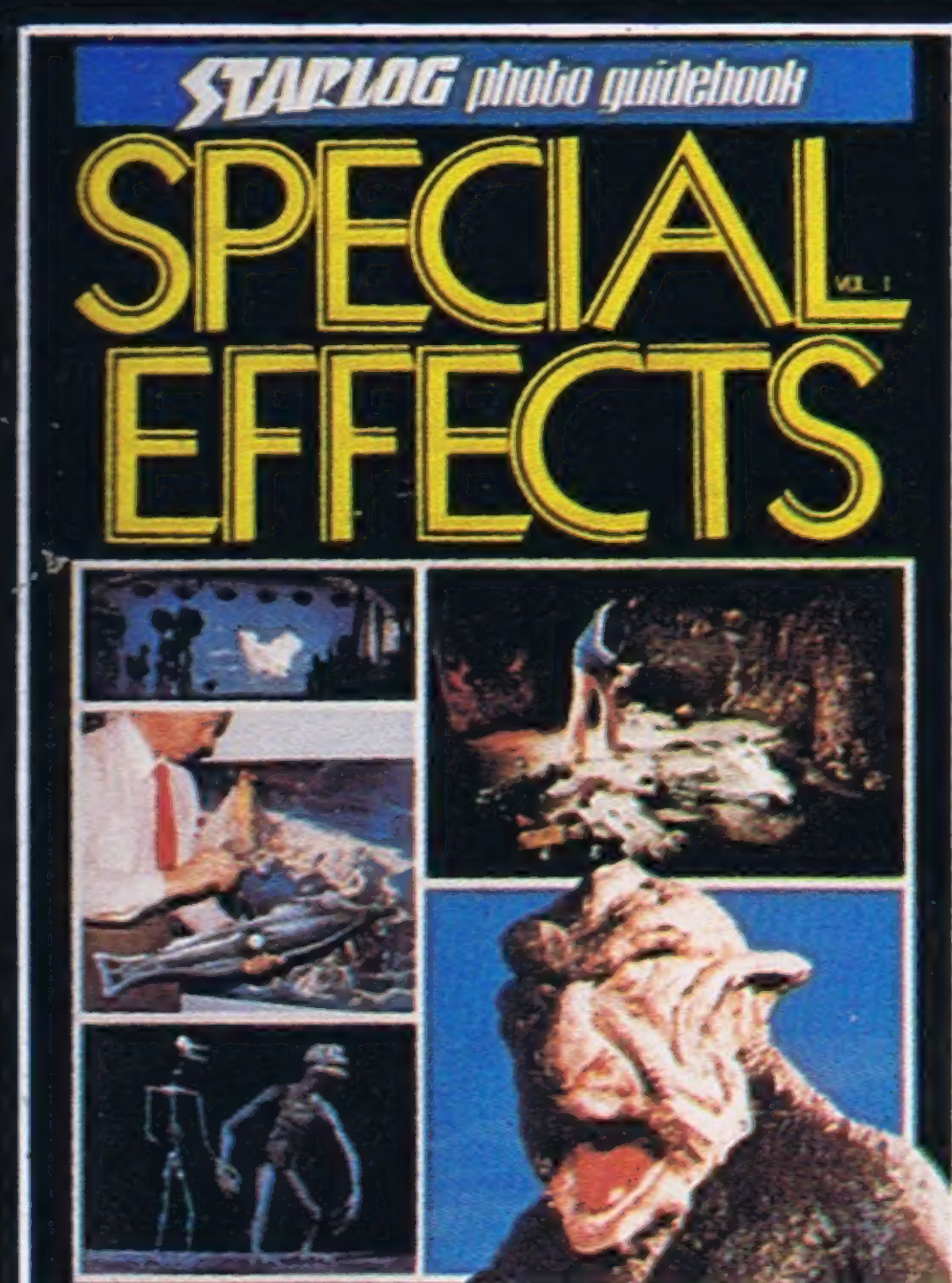
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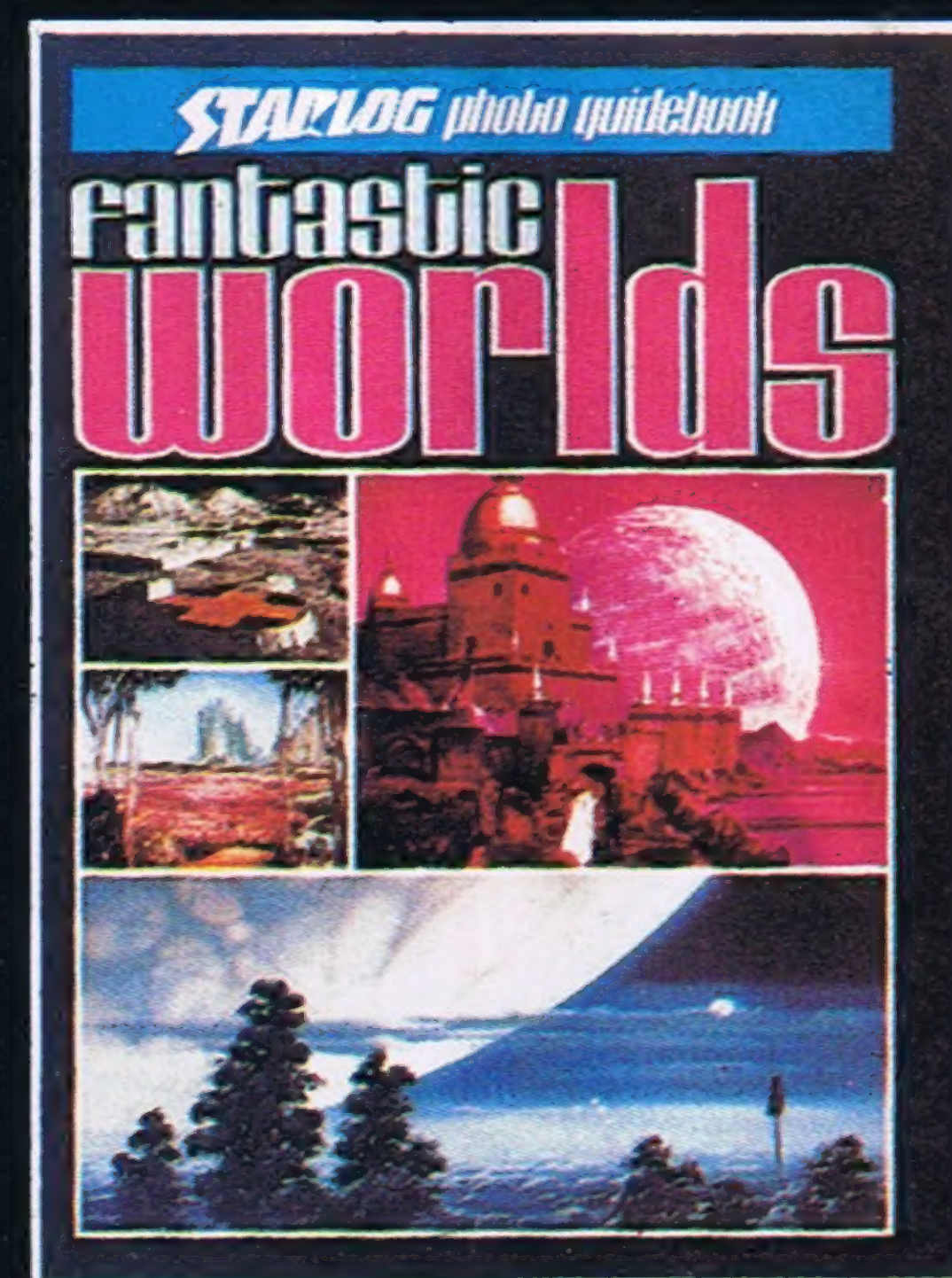
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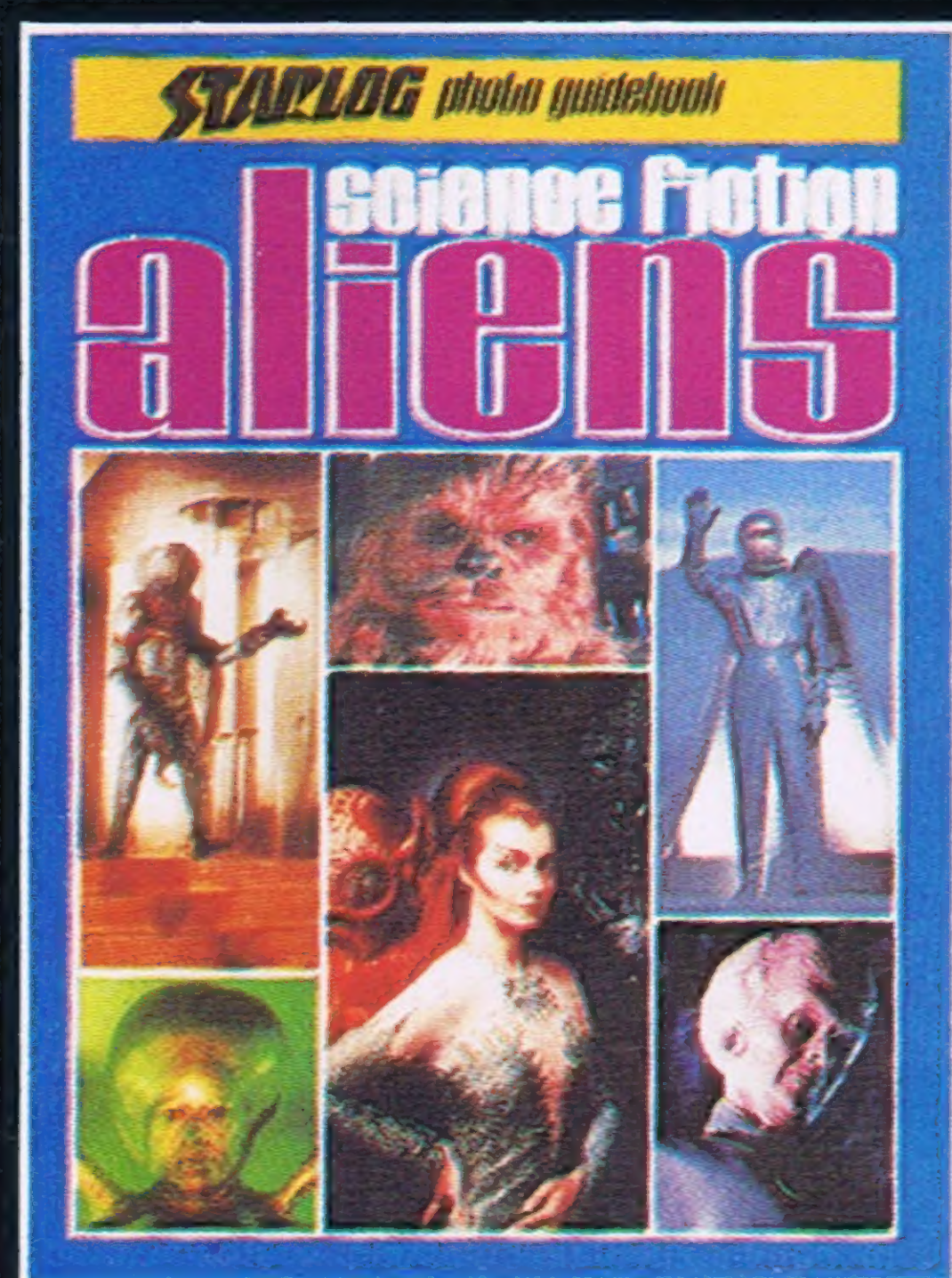
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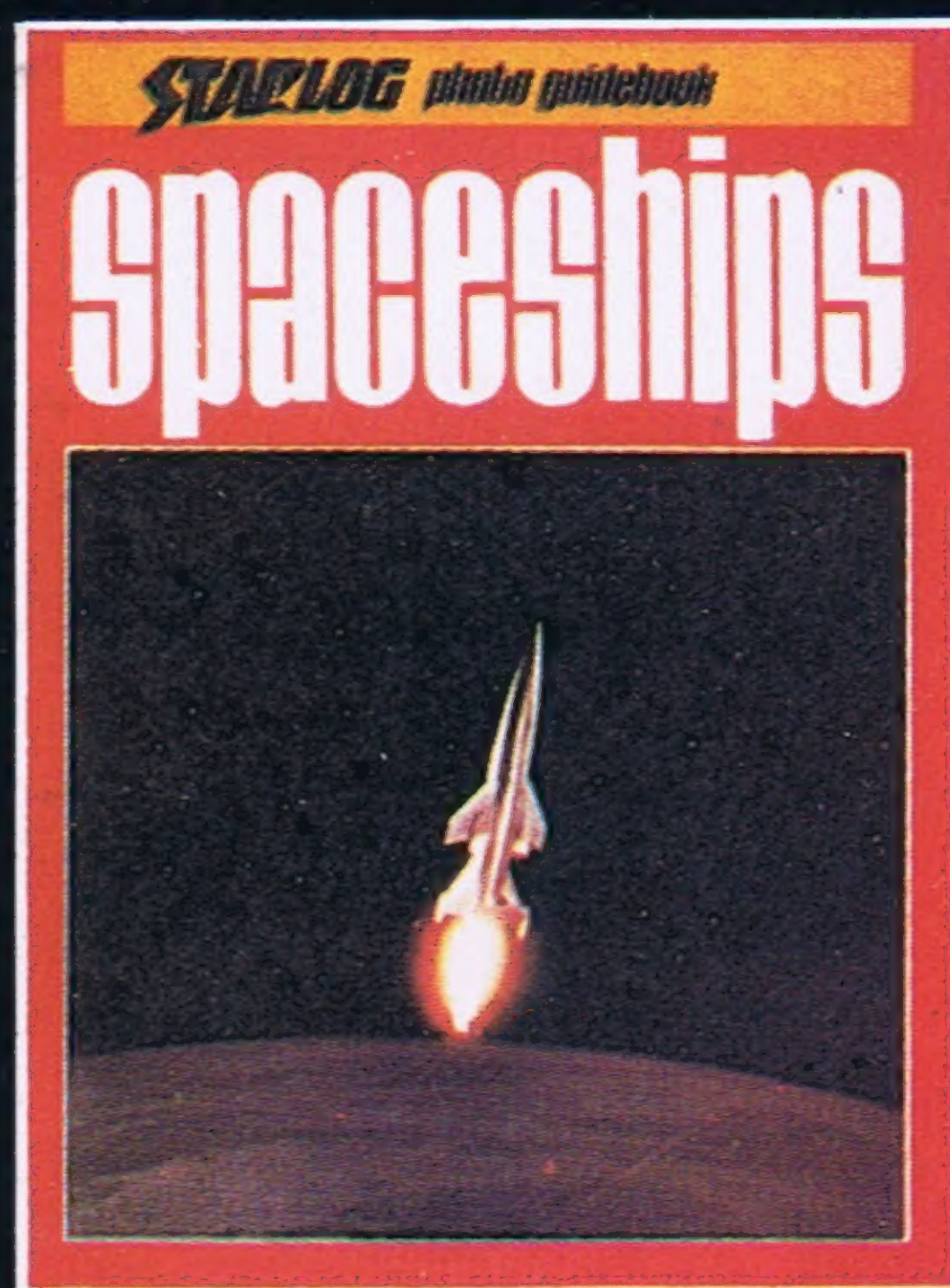
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